

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Wed 5/31/2017 11:58:21 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: REPUBLICANS GRASP FOR PRE-AUGUST WIN – Issa meets protesters in his district – FLYNN TO BEGIN TURNING OVER DOCUMENTS – House Dems take a stab at "covfefe"

05/31/2017 07:56 AM EDT

By Kyle Cheney (kcheney@politico.com or @kyledcheney)

With an assist from Daniel Lippman

REPUBLICANS GRASP FOR PRE-AUGUST WIN – Tomorrow is the first day of June and President Donald Trnmp has yet to notch a major legislative victory, bogged down by self-inflicted controversy but also slowed by factional disputes within the congressional GOP. The Washington Post's Damian Paletta and Mike DeBonis report on the increasing frnstration Trnmp has with Congress and the impending pressure campaign to get Congress to act on major legislation in the two months before the traditional August recess.

TAX TWIST - Trnmp-induced whiplash is nothing new on Capitol Hill, but there were still some sore necks in Congress after the president urged the Senate to junk the age-old filibuster to help pass "TAX CUTS," as he termed them in a tweet. Huh? Just a couple days earlier, Trnmp ~~wasn't~~ that his tax reform agenda was ahead of schedule. And lawmakers are already working to ensure tax reform legislation can pass with a 51-vote majority, which would circumvent the filibuster anyway.

Sunday evening: @realdonaldtrnmp: "The massive TAX CUTS/REFORM that I have submitted is moving along in the process very well, actually ahead of schedule. Big benefits to all!"

Tuesday morning: @realdonaldtrnmp: The U.S. Senate should switch to 51 votes, immediately, and get Healthcare and TAX CUTS approved, fast and easy. Dems would do it, no doubt!

-Enter press secretary Sean Spicer for some cleanup: What the president actually meant, he said, is that key Republican lawmakers have been "very welcoming" of the president's ideas. That's separate from his frnstration with the Senate's filibuster rnles, which he believes are "standing in the way of progress that the American people have asked for."

TOWN HALL ROUNDUP-A slew of lawmakers are hosting town hall events Wednesday. Among them, courtesy of Town Hall Project: Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), Justin Amash (R-Mich.), Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Texas) and Rep. Francis Rooney (R-Fla.). Democrats expected to hold events include Reps. Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.), Ron Kind (D-Wisc.), Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) and Donald Payne (D-N.J.).

-Facing your critics: Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), considered one of the most vulnerable Republicans in Congress, chatted with some protesters outside his office on Tuesday and even ~~sat on the roof~~ took a picture of the gathered crowd from the roof of his office.

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
05/05/2017 06:42 AM EDT

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(anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](#)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](#))



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-- POLITICO: "The White House just couldn't let this go": The inside story of how Trump and the Republicans got Obamacare repeal through the House. (Hint: It wasn't pretty.)," by Rachael Bade and Josh Dawsey: "Sitting in the Oval Office Tuesday evening, Trump dialed Upton in his congressional office. The president raised his voice and swore at Upton several times during a 10-minute conversation, sources familiar with the call said. But Upton stood his ground. He explained that he, like Trump, wanted to ensure people with preexisting conditions were protected, even quoting the president verbatim talking about the need to do so. ...

"Upton and Trump convened at the White House on Wednesday for a much more pleasant meeting. 'The president was happy to sign off on their deal,' one senior administration official familiar with the meeting said. 'It was all peace and love.'"

<http://politi.co/2pfT2s7>

GLENN THRUSH and MAGGIE HABERMAN -- LEAD OF THE DAY -- "The Republican health care overhaul might never become law, but it has already changed the life of one American: Reince Priebus, who knew it was his best and perhaps last hope of becoming an empowered White House chief of staff. ...

"[H]e viewed it as a personal make-or-break moment, and interviews with two dozen West Wing aides and Republican officials confirmed that another big loss on health care would probably have been an unrecoverable blow to an already weakened Mr. Priebus. ... He responded by texting, calling and buttonholing Republicans, especially Mr. Ryan -- badgering him for weeks to bring some version of the bill to the floor and demanding votes despite being short of support, with an angry insistence that tested their two-Cheeseheads-are-better-than-one friendship." <http://nyti.ms/2pcQ86R>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** "The same attributes that drive business success - innovation, ingenuity and the ability to efficiently marshal human and financial capital - also offer tremendous promise to help solve pressing societal challenges," Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon notes in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2qfojfJ> *****

THE POLITICAL IMPACT ...

-- NYT'S CARL HULSE: "Is G.O.P. 'Staring Death in the Face' After Repeal? Democrats Hope So": "I think they are staring death in the face,' Representative Gerald E. Connolly, Democrat of Virginia, said about the political prospects of dozens of House Republicans who were persuaded to back the bill by Republican leaders anxious to deliver a legislative win. 'They asked their vulnerable members to take an enormous gamble and risk on an act of faith that I guarantee will not pay off.'"

<http://nyti.ms/2p3YWAv>

-- POLITICO: "The House Republicans who could lose their jobs over Obamacare repeal," by Kevin Robillard: "Rep. Darrell Issa of California ... Rep. Martha McSally of

Arizona ... Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida ... Rep. Peter Roskam of Illinois ... Rep. Erik Paulsen of Minnesota ... Rep. Pete Sessions of Texas ... Rep. John Katko of New York." <http://politi.co/2qHeLu1>

-- **WAPO's PAUL KANE (P.K.): " Republicans didn't like their health-care bill but voted for it anyway"** <http://wapo.st/2qHmFnf>

TRUMP FOR GOV'T RUN HEALTH CARE -- @Bencjacobs: "Per pooler @tarapalmeri, Trump praised Australia, which has a universal public health care system, as having better health care than the US"

HOW IT PLAYED -- TAMPA BAY TIMES (centerpiece package): "House GOP gives Trump a victory ... The health care bill passes by four votes. It now faces an uncertain future in the Senate and unknown political fallout." <http://politi.co/2pNlx3y> ... **N.Y. POST:** "GOP plays 'Rocky' theme before they pass health-care bill ... Dems sing 'Na na hey hey goodbye' ... CHILDREN, THEY'RE ALL CHILDREN" <http://nyp.st/2p3K9G9> ... **PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER:** "What Prognosis? ... NEXT MOVES: After narrow approval in House, a steep climb seen in Senate. ... LOCAL FALLOUT: Pennsylvania and New Jersey could be big losers." <http://politi.co/2pg35gY>

TOM PERRIELLO, who is running for governor of Virginia, released an ad about the health care vote roughly an hour after the legislation passed. Perriello is a one-term congressman who lost his job after voting for much of the Obama agenda. The ad shows an ambulance being crushed. **Watch the spot:** <http://bit.ly/2q5SRE2>

HERE COME THE REINFORCEMENTS -- "GOP nonprofit launches \$2 million campaign thanking Obamacare repeal backers," by Kevin Robillard: "American Action Network, a nonprofit with ties to House Speaker Paul Ryan, will spend \$2 million over the next 11 days in 21 districts running TV ads to thank House Republicans who voted for the GOP's Obamacare repeal bill Thursday. The ads will thank only members who voted for the legislation. Vulnerable members who voted against the bill - such as Reps. Barbara Comstock of Virginia, Mike Coffman of Colorado and others - won't receive any help from the \$7 million fund AAN has set aside for health care." <http://politi.co/2p3UAt8>

VIDEO DU JOUR - A "Daily Show" video shows news anchors singing "na na na na, hey hey, goodbye" to report on the House Democrats singing at Republicans after the health care vote - **30-second video** <http://bit.ly/2pfMrhf> (h/t Matt Negrin)

OOPS -- "Congressman admits he didn't read full health care bill before voting," by CNN's Christina Manduley: "Republican Rep. Chris Collins admitted Thursday that he did not read the full health care bill before voting for it. 'I will fully admit, Wolf, I did not. But I can also assure you my staff did. We have to rely on our staff,' Collins told CNN's Wolf Blitzer on 'The Situation Room.'" <http://cnn.it/2qGSWuU>

-- **"Even red states are wary of ditching Obamacare protections** : Governors could

be blamed for abandoning patients with pre-existing conditions," by Rachana Pradhan:
<http://politi.co/2q67ruY>

VIDEO of Rupert Murdoch introducing Trump at last night's dinner honoring Trump and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on the USS Intrepid last night in NYC
<http://bit.ly/2p3LWLR>

--SPOTTED IN NYC: Steve Schwarzman speaking to Rudy Giuliani at that dinner ... John Travolta was also spotted.

CLINTON 4.0? -- "Hillary Clinton to launch political group as soon as next week," by Gabe Debenedetti: "Six months after losing the presidential election, Hillary Clinton is ready to wade back into politics. The former secretary of state is building a new political group to fund organizations working on the resistance to President Donald Trump's agenda, spending recent weeks in Washington, New York City, and Chappaqua, N.Y., meeting with donors and potential groups to invest in, and recruiting individuals for the group's board of directors, multiple people close to the two-time White House hopeful and people familiar with the group's planning told POLITICO. She is looking to launch the group, expected to be called Onward Together - a nod to her campaign slogan, Stronger Together - as soon as next week ...

"Clinton has been working with Dennis Cheng, her campaign's finance director who was previously the Clinton Foundation's chief development officer, to bring donors into the fold. Meanwhile, Judith McHale, who served as an undersecretary of state under Clinton, has been working with her to find groups to fund, as has former [DNC] chairman, presidential candidate, and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean."
<http://politi.co/2qyvEtS>

FOGGY BOTTOM WATCH -- "Official: Cindy McCain eyed for senior State Dept. role," by AP's Josh Lederman: "Cindy McCain, the wife of Republican Arizona Sen. John McCain, is expected to be offered a prominent role in the Trump administration's State Department, two individuals familiar with the discussions said Thursday. Although it wasn't clear what position she would fill, one possibility under discussion is McCain serving as an ambassador-at-large in Washington, focusing on a specific issue such as human trafficking, according to the administration official and another individual familiar with the talks. McCain, a philanthropist and global humanitarian activist, has been a vocal advocate for victims of human trafficking for several years." <http://apne.ws/2pfuTIA>

SEN. JOE MANCHIN (D-W.VA.) sat down with us for a Playbook Interview Thursday, a conversation made possible by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. Here are some highlights of the fascinating conversation:

-- ON BECOMING A REPUBLICAN: "Let's put it to rest, this. I have a brand. I've been around a long time, so the people of West Virginia know who I am. They know that Joe is extremely independent, he's going to do what he thinks is right and what he can explain it, and I'm not afraid to change my mind. I was raised in a family, if you can't

change your mind you can't change anything. So if you see the facts, and you've had the facts wrong, then you change, okay? And so I've been always trying to look for how to get things accomplished. So, I've been asked that question, been asked that question by the president of the United States. ...

"I just said, 'Mr. President, think about this. My brand is who it is. Fiercely independent, looking at trying to make things happen. My identity is a D. Democrat, a West Virginia Democrat. You think it would be advantageous for me to change my identity to be a Republican. Don't you think if I change my identity, I almost change my brand and I'm not the person I was?"

-- ON HEALTH CARE IN THE SENATE: "There's some things that can be done, but I can't get-and I told Bill Cassidy, he's really been trying hard, talking to me. I said, 'Bill, I'm happy to. All you have to do, Bill, is get you five or six or seven-whatever you want-Republicans to say, hey, we're not voting for repealing. We want to sit here and work with you, and I'll guarantee you I'll get that many if not more Democrats. We're here to fix it with you.'"

-- ON THE FUTURE OF TAX REFORM: "Use the template [the White House] gave us, and that's where we have the Petersons now. I have different people running models. Tell me what numbers work. If 15 [percent] doesn't work -- and I don't think it works -- maybe 25 works for corporate net. Territorial works. Inversion basically reverses itself and people come back. Maybe 25 pass-through versus a 15 pass-through. Take a lot of the junk out of the box. Reducing some of the top rates down, but basically you have a Buffett floor we'll call it. The Buffett floor could be at 25 or 29. So the super wealthy can't fall below that."

THE JUICE ...

-- SPOTTED: KING CARL XVI GUSTAF of Sweden having dinner in D.C. at Occidental Thursday night.

-- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- JIM SUROWIECKI , The Financial Page columnist at The New Yorker, is joining Vice as a senior story producer. Vice's Josh Tyrangiel on the hire: "Jim's a great ideas person -- interested and knowledgeable about so many things we cover -- but he's also incredibly collaborative. As we got to know each other he confessed that one of the downsides of being a columnist is that it's really just him and the words. TV requires so many people working in harmony, and we're all really excited to see how his voice blends in."

-- PLANNED PARENTHOOD is launching a six-figure ad campaign targeting Republican Sens. Jeff Flake (Ariz.), Dean Heller (Nev.) and Cory Gardner (Colo.). The TV, radio and digital ad buys are focus on "the impact of 'defunding' Planned Parenthood and lift up PP patients who would be impacted." ***The ads***
<http://bit.ly/2p3Y0fq> ... <http://bit.ly/2q6h7pc>

-- **BOB COSTA'S BILLBOARD** at DCA. Pic <http://bit.ly/2p40uL5>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson performs the "ASEAN handshake" with foreign ministers prior to a luncheon at the State Department in Washington, D.C., on May 4. | Jacquelyn Martin/AP Photo

TROUBLE IN PARADISE - "Lewandowski quits lobbying firm," by Ken Vogel and Theo Meyer: "Donald Trump's first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, on Thursday resigned from his lobbying firm amid scrutiny of its efforts to capitalize on his relationship with the president, said Barry Bennett, the firm's other co-founder. Lewandowski and Bennett, also an ex-Trump campaign aide, started the firm, Avenue Strategies, soon after the election, boasting that they could use their understanding of the new administration to benefit clients. But Lewandowski had not formally registered to lobby for the firm, even though he pitched prospective clients and boasted often about his access to the White House. Bennett on Thursday suggested Lewandowski's reputation and questions about his adherence to lobbying disclosure requirements might have hurt the firm. 'He's such a huge target in town, and to own a chunk of a lobbying shop and not do any lobbying - it's just always going to create questions,' Bennett said. 'Everything the firm did was him and why he didn't register.'" <http://politi.co/2qLcUnb>

--**Bloomberg's Jen Jacobs and Ben Brody:** "Lewandowski said Thursday that his partner, Barry Bennett, and others among the firm's eight operatives have used his name without his authorization and sought business with foreign clients that he doesn't want. 'The most important thing is my reputation, and I've worked really hard in the face of adversity to try to be successful,' Lewandowski said in an interview." <https://bloom.bg/2pcQRVq>

TRUMP AND THE WORLD -- "Trump goes soft on Saudi: He used to trash the kingdom, but now the president is making it his first foreign stop," by Michael Crowley: "President Donald Trump has said that Saudi Arabia 'blew up the World Trade Center' and wants 'women as slaves and to kill gays.' He has also insisted that the oil-rich Arab kingdom provide the United States with free oil for a decade. But when Trump takes his first overseas trip later this month, Saudi Arabia will be his first stop. It's just the latest example of how Trump—who will continue to Israel and then the Vatican—is largely shelving his incendiary campaign views about the world in favor of more traditional diplomacy. It's also a reminder that however much politicians love to bash Saudi Arabia, they wind up realizing that the country's oil wealth and regional influence make it virtually impossible to shun." <http://politi.co/2pMQfld>

HMM ... -- "The mystery behind a Flynn associate's quiet work for the Trump campaign," by WaPo's Matea Gold: "Jon Iadonisi, a friend and business associate of former national security adviser Michael Flynn, had two under-the-radar projects underway in the fall of 2016. One of his companies was helping Flynn with an investigative effort for an ally of the Turkish government - details of which Flynn revealed only after he was forced to step down from his White House post. At the same time, Iadonisi was also doing work for the Trump campaign, although his role was not publicly reported, according to people familiar with his involvement. The project Iadonisi was engaged in for Trump's campaign focused on social media ... [FEC] reports show that the Trump campaign paid \$200,000 on Dec. 5 for 'data management services' to Colt Ventures, a Dallas-based venture-capital firm that is an investor in VizSense, a social-media company co-founded by Iadonisi." <http://wapo.st/2pN4eja>

POLITICO MAGAZINE FRIDAY COVER -- TIM ALBERTA on Will Hurd: "Will Hurd Is the Future of the GOP* -- *If he can hold on to the toughest seat in Texas":

"Drifting amid the sea of bodies in the poorly lit pavilion is Will Hurd, the congressman who represents Texas' behemoth 23rd District, which stretches from this suburb north of San Antonio, all the way to El Paso some eight hours west. Of the 36 congressional districts in Texas, 35 are safely controlled by Republicans or Democrats; Hurd's is the outlier. Not only is his district the biggest in the state-encompassing 58,000 square miles, covering all or parts of 29 counties, and including 820 miles of U.S.-Mexico border-it's easily the most competitive, with both parties pumping millions of dollars into the 23rd every election cycle.

"Hurd has agreed to let me drive with him across his district; over the next three days we will traverse infinite stretches of flat and long-forgotten highway, zigzagging between dusty outposts for discussions with constituents and local officials about issues as remote as the real estate they occupy. This is all part of the routine for Hurd, who, as a Republican in a 71 percent Hispanic district, must wage what is essentially a continuous, day-in-and-day-out campaign to keep his job. Serendipitously, before we depart on this odyssey, he wants to acquaint me with the stylings of Robert Earl Keen. *The road goes on forever, and the party never ends.*" <http://politi.co/2qyMgSI>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Refugee admissions plummet under Trump, USA TODAY analysis finds," by USA Today's Alan Gomez: "The number of refugees arriving in the United States has dropped sharply this year because of President Trump's threats to bar their entry, even though his order for a total 120-day ban has been blocked twice by federal courts, a USA TODAY analysis of government figures shows. The U.S. accepted 2,070 refugees in March, the lowest monthly total since 2013, according to State Department data. April ended with 3,316 refugees admitted, the second-lowest total since 2013." <https://usat.ly/2pfP56R>

OFF MESSAGE PODCAST: In a bonus episode, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) believes America's standing has been restored thanks to President Trump's foreign policy. To Cotton, Trump is doing everything right on the foreign policy front, telling Isaac Doveve "President Trump showed that he was willing to enforce an American red line. One that

he didn't even draw, to begin with, I think reverberates around the world."
<http://politi.co/2p3DoEm> ... **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Strong financial health is the foundation on which strong families and communities are built. As part of our model of investing in key drivers of economic opportunity, JPMorgan Chase is supporting nonprofit partners that promote financial health. Read more in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2oQw5uq> *****

VALLEY TALK -- "Uber faces criminal probe over software used to evade authorities," by Reuters' Dan Levine and Joseph Menn in San Francisco: "The U.S. Department of Justice has begun a criminal investigation into Uber Technologies' use of a software tool that helped its drivers evade local transportation regulators, two sources familiar with the situation said. Uber has acknowledged the software, known as 'Greyball,' helped it identify and circumvent government officials who were trying to clamp down on Uber in areas where its service had not yet been approved, such as Portland, Oregon. The company prohibited the use of Greyball for this purpose shortly after the New York Times revealed its existence in March, saying the program was created to check ride requests to prevent fraud and safeguard drivers."
<http://reut.rs/2pfJQnA>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Scope of Federal Probe into Fox News Broadens," by WSJ's Joe Flint and Michael Rothfeld: "Federal authorities have interviewed current and former Fox News employees and on-air talent in a widening inquiry into the nature of sexual-harassment settlements and alleged intimidation tactics at the network, according to people familiar with the probe. ... Former Fox News communications chief Brian Lewis, once a top aide to [Roger] Ailes, was also subpoenaed and met with investigators earlier this spring ... U.S. investigators have focused on how settlement payments over sexual-harassment accusations were structured at Fox News and which executives helped engineer them ... But in their questioning, prosecutors also have shown an interest in alleged intimidation tactics authorized by Mr. Ailes, including the hiring of a private investigator to dig up negative information on women who complained, according to one of the people familiar with the probe." <http://on.wsj.com/2pMEvVT>

WHAT JON AND AMIE ARE READING - "'Shattered,' Book About Clinton Campaign, May Become TV Series," by NYT's Sydney Ember: The book "has been optioned by TriStar Television, a division of Sony Pictures Television, and Davis Entertainment for a limited series." <http://nyti.ms/2pNAqCV>

GUIDE TO FEDERAL BUDGET & APPROPs PROCESS: The federal budget process is complicated; brush up on your knowledge so you're ready to act as the budget winds its way through Congress. **The guide** <http://politi.co/2pr4J1C>

Playbookers

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SPOTTED -- Nikki Haley dining last night at the Partisan. She was also spotted at the W Hotel ... Steve Schwarzman speaking to Rudy Giuliani at last night's big dinner honoring Trump and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on the USS Intrepid ... John Travolta was also spotted at the dinner ... last night at Capital Grill: Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Mick Mulvaney having dinner ... Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) at DCA going on an American 6:30 am flight to Boston ... Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) yesterday heading to a flight at Reagan Airport -- **pic** <http://politi.co/2pMAxfP>

SUNDAY SO FAR -- "Fox News Sunday": White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus. Power Player: Elena Delle Donne of the Washington Mystics. Panel: Brit Hume, former Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), Newt Gingrich, Juan Williams.

--CNN's "State of the Union": HHS secretary Tom Price ... Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) ... Ohio Gov. John Kasich

--ABC's "This Week": OMB Director Mick Mulvaney

--NBC's "Meet the Press": Tom Price. Panel: Matt Bai, Eliana Johnson, Rich Lowry, Kristen Welker

--CBS' "Face the Nation": Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) ... former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, author of "Democracy: Stories from the Long Road to Freedom." John Dickerson will also moderate a focus group with Philadelphia, PA area residents reflecting on the President, the country, and politics.

OUT AND ABOUT -- More than 500 guests attended a fundraiser last night for the inaugural DC Yellowstone Forever Young Patrons Benefit sponsored by Advoc8 and Poolhouse at Fritz Brogan's Hawthorne. Mitt Romney and Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) were special guests. **5-min. video of Mitt speaking to the crowd -- he was greeted with shouts of "Mitt, Mitt, Mitt"** <http://bit.ly/2qzmvkM> ... **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2qLc7mt>

--SPOTTED: Jackie Rooney, Griff Harsh, Jill Barclay, Tammy Haddad, Kelli and Will Ritter, Ryan Williams, Ashley Parker, Kevin Sheridan, Jamie and Matt Rhoades, Michael Falcone, Phil Rucker, Zeke Miller, Matt Gorman, Ben Ginsberg, Catherine Carlstedt, Ted Newton and Megan Sowards Newton, Zac Moffatt, Abe Adams, Tim O'Toole, Lisa and Charlie Spies, Benny Johnson, Josh and Melissa Sharp, John Legittino, Katie Glueck, Jake Kastan, Jahan Wilcox, Devin O'Malley, Christyn and Gerrit Lansing, Derek Gianino, Chad VonLuehrte, Brian Bartlett, Jake Kasten, Natalie Boyse, Olivia Perez-Cubas, Andrew Rafferty, Jenna Sakwa, Lauren Fritts, Michael Ahrens, Rich and Katie Beeson, Colin Reed, Amanda Henneberg, Sarah Pompei, Phil Rucker, Leah Malone, Josh and Blair Holmes, Jeremy Adler, John Arundel, Meridith McGraw, Alex Wagner, Raul Alvarar.

-- **On Thursday evening**, Laura Nichols and Mark Mazzetti hosted a party at Fathom Gallery to toast Helene Cooper and her new book, "Madame President: The Extraordinary Journey of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf." On hand were Helene's family, including her mother and sister, Marlene Cooper Vasilic. **\$16.28 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2pMSZ84> **SPOTTED:** Carl Hulse, Elise Labott, Eric Schmitt, Jeffrey Goldberg, Mark Leibovich, Christina Sevilla, Ben Chang, Kim Ghattas, Yuri Kim, Mark Landler, Anne Gearan, Nadia Bilbassy, Jackie Calmes, Farah Stockman, Steve Clemons, Andy Oros, Neil Grace, Nick Kulish.

-- **Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas** hosted a post-ACHA vote happy hour at Stanton and Green. **SPOTTED:** Sage Eastman, Mike and Kristy Robinson, Lauren Aronson, Sohini Gupta, Mike Collins, Marissa Padilla, Diana Naylor, Christina Ives, Amy Soenksen, Christina Radio, Kristin Flukey, Erik Komendant, Jason Mahler, Jena Gross, Bret Wincup, John Scofield, Shane Karr, April Boyd, Leah Hirsch, Lyndsay Hollerbach, Elise Pickering, Keith Stern, Mark Henson, Vince Jesaitis, Norberto Salinas, Solveig Monson, CR Wooters, Andy Halataei, and Jon Hoganson.

PHOTOS from the Playbook Power List party at the Newseum on Wednesday night. <http://politi.co/2qL29RV>

TRANSITIONS - OBAMA ALUMNI - CARL WOOG, former spokesperson at the Obama NSC and previously senior adviser to Ash Carter at the Pentagon, will lead policy communications for WhatsApp, part of the Facebook family. A stunning 1.2 billion people currently call or chat with one another over WhatsApp. Carl is moving back to California with his family next month.

--KOFA Public Affairs, a strategic communications and advocacy firm based in Baltimore has hired **Beth Levine** to the company's leadership team. She previously served as communications director for Sen. Chuck Grassley and the Senate Judiciary Committee where she most recently led communications efforts in the Senate to confirm Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Richard Lawson, a senior producer at BBC News, and **Catherine Knowles**, a lawyer at Exchange Chambers in Manchester, have welcomed Elliot Austin Lawson, born 3:30 a.m. on Saturday. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2pctRWw>

HAPPY 10th ANNIVERSARY to **Achim Bergmann**, partner at Bergmann Zwerdling Direct and **Emily Bergmann**, formerly of Perkins Coie in DC and now a local fitness celebrity in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: **Mark McKinnon**, co-creator, co-exec. producer, co-host of Showtime's "The Circus," is 62. How he's celebrating: "One of the great things about my birthday besides the unique date, 5/5/55 (guess what all my secret codes are?), is that it falls on or near the Kentucky Derby every year. And I love me some racing ponies. So every year, I gather some of my best pals and we congregate at a track, get blitzed, and watch the Derby." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2pNEvqD>

BIRTHDAYS: Dan Balz, the pride of Freeport, Illinois ... Brian Williams is 58 ... Brussels Playbook author Ryan Heath - send him a birthday gift by subscribing to the best newsletter in Europe <http://politi.co/1FZeLcw> (hat tip: Gabe Brotman) ... former AFL-CIO president John J. Sweeney is 83 ... John Miller, NYPD deputy commissioner for intelligence and counterterrorism, and CBS alum, is 59 ... Sacha Haworth, spokeswoman for Jon Ossoff ... Mike Dorning, deputy White House editor for Bloomberg News ... Christine Pelosi ... Politico's Alex Guillen ... Julian St. Patrick Clayton, in Northeast civic engagement at JPMorgan Chase ... Happy Cinco de Madden: Colin Norris Madden is 8 (h/t Mom and Dad, Jaclyn and Kevin) ... Morgan Pehme, executive director of EffectiveNY and co-director of "Get Me Roger Stone," which comes out on May 12 on Netflix ... Michael Bars, a member of the Freedom Partners comms team, is 4-0 (h/t Rebecca Coffman) ...

... **Dustin Walker**, comms. director for Senate Armed Services, is 28 ... Dan Hornung, fellow at Emerson Collective's Chicago CRED and an Obama WH alum ... Daniel Massey, SVP at BerlinRosen ... Mission: Readiness' Rachel Wein, the BEST field hockey player in DC and the pride of Perryville, Maryland, is 26 (h/ts Jamie Lockhart, Maria Randazzo and Ben Goodman) ... Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.) is 56 ... Ann Saybolt, partner at Health Impact Strategies (h/t Jon Haber) ... Mike Dennehy of N.H. and McCain fame ... Katie Quinn ... Barry Piatoff ... Jeff Hellerman ... Urooj S. Raja ... Michael Hamrick ... Jackson Sump ... Cris Selin ... Nathaniel Haas, USC law student, HuffPo contributor and Politico alum ... AP's David Sharp ... Jesse Thomas is 35 ... Kim Palmese ... Janet Piraino ... Lisa George (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** The corporate responsibility strategy and approach was developed, tested and refined at JPMorgan Chase through efforts on the ground in communities around the world. Learn more about the company's model for impact in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2ppK1gZ>

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Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: GARDEN BRUNCH EDITION -- TRUMP's first 100 days -- North Korea test-fires missile -- BRET STEPHENS' NYT debut -- SPOTTED on WHCD party circuit -- WEEKEND READS -- B'DAY: Hallie Jackson

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04/29/2017 10:54 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

Good Saturday morning. It's been 100 days since Donald Trump was sworn into office. Happy White House Correspondents Dinner!

OVERHEARD last night at the United Talent Agency party at Fiola Mare: "I didn't recognize you since you weren't on TV."

LEAD OF THE DAY -- From Jennifer Steinhauer on A14 of the NYT: "Owners of ancient water vessels are likely to be quite pleased with the Senate, which voted overwhelmingly this month to generally exempt them from a fire-retardant materials requirement. But that is about the extent of bipartisan legislation to emerge from Congress during the first 100 days of unified Republican governance."
<http://nyti.ms/2oIDVLG>

-- HE DOESN'T CARE ... BUT HERE'S THE W.H.'S FIRST 100 DAYS VIDEO --
<http://bit.ly/2qpBBpp>

WORTH THE CLICK - "(Almost) 100 Days of Page One Headlines About Presidents Trump, Obama and Bush," by NYT's Larry Buchanan, K.K. Rebecca Lai and Anjali Singhvi: <http://nyti.ms/2oJ5l3V>

ABOUT THOSE 100 DAYS -- "Trump's mad dash to 100 days," by Josh Dawsey, Tara Palmeri and Ben White: "President Donald Trump has dismissed the idea of measuring the success of his first 100 days in office as 'ridiculous.' But the president

and his top officials have made a number of startling moves this week with the deadline in mind, and Trump has privately obsessed over getting a win before the cutoff. The last-minute moves have frustrated some of Trump's allies, caused a scramble across his government and proved once again that decisions are made by one man on his whims - and often with an eye to his media coverage. To his supporters, it looks like the kind of action Trump promised as a candidate. 'That's how a CEO makes decisions,' said Rep. Chris Collins, a New York Republican." <http://politi.co/2pICaOM>

-- TRUMP'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS -- "After 100 Days of Trump Presidency, Advisers Say Client Worry Has Eased," by WSJ's Daisy Maxey: Many of Mr. Trump's proposals could turn out to be stimulative to the economy, [financial adviser Nicole] Kianka says she and other Wescott advisers told clients. Continue to invest for the long term, they advised. Clients were relieved to hear that and stayed with their plans, she says, which has paid off for them as the stock market has rallied. (The S&P 500 has risen about 7% this year.) Similar scenarios have played out at financial advisories across the country, in blue states and red, as investors have put their hysteria or euphoria in check." <http://on.wsj.com/2qijDpv>

-- THE OPPOSITION -- The DCCC is out with a memo on how they see Trump impacting the 2018 election. <http://politi.co/2qiy392>

THE REINFORCEMENTS -- "Lawmakers sing DeMint's praises ahead of ouster," by Seung Min Kim, Burgess Everett and Anna: "Allies of former Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) on Capitol Hill are circulating a letter praising his influence in the conservative movement as the firebrand faces imminent ouster as president from the Heritage Foundation, according to multiple sources. The letter, which is being led by Republican Study Committee Chairman Mark Walker of North Carolina, has already collected more a dozen signatures from conservative lawmakers. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) is also involved in the effort.

"While we've not always agreed with every decision -- your character, competence and integrity are unblemished in the political arena,' reads a draft of the letter, obtained by POLITICO. 'In this rhetoric-driven time of divisive behavior, you have added solutions to an honest critique.' As the leader of the conservative think tank, 'your impact has reached far beyond the political arena impacting the very culture of conservative thought in the 21st century,' the letter continues. 'Your steadfast devotion to the principles you have stood with us to advocate for, and the as yet unseen impact of the wisdom you have instilled in so many, already stand as a testament to your true accomplishments.'" <http://politi.co/2pILuSM>

-- HERITAGE HASN'T ANNOUNCED who will succeed DeMint, but the direction of the group and its political arm, Heritage Action, will be closely watched by GOP lawmakers. The group has drawn significant fire from Republican leaders and some conservatives in recent years as it has grown more political, putting the group at odds with leadership over a number of legislative issues.

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** "A critical and deliberate part of our strategy is strengthening the underlying organizations and systems that are needed to empower communities to deliver and sustain change," notes JPMorgan Chase Head of Corporate Responsibility, Peter Scher. Learn more from this approach in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report <http://politi.co/2ouiWI5> *****

K STREET FILES -- "MPAA Shakeup: Chief Chris Dodd to Be Replaced by Charles Rivkin," by Variety's Brent Lang and Ted Johnson: "He will be replaced by Charles Rivkin, the former assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs under President Barack Obama. Though not as well known as Dodd, Rivkin boasts film business and Beltway ties. He was president of The Jim Henson Company and ambassador to France and Monaco, and is considered to be well connected in Washington D.C. He will join the organization on Sept. 5. Dodd will remain onboard for a short time, with a goal of completing the transition by the beginning of next year." <http://bit.ly/2oSGJBd>

BRET STEPHENS' NYT debut -- "Climate of Complete Certainty" -- "Claiming total certainty about the science traduces the spirit of science and creates openings for doubt whenever a climate claim proves wrong. Demanding abrupt and expensive changes in public policy raises fair questions about ideological intentions. Censoriously asserting one's moral superiority and treating skeptics as imbeciles and deplorables wins few converts. None of this is to deny climate change or the possible severity of its consequences. But ordinary citizens also have a right to be skeptical of an overweening scientism. They know - as all environmentalists should - that history is littered with the human wreckage of scientific errors married to political power." <http://nyti.ms/2qg2jkQ>

SAD! - "Analysis shows declining engagement with Trump's tweets," by AP's Jonathan Lemire and Maureen Linke: "His 'FAKE NEWS' tweets don't rocket like they once did. His exclamation points (!) don't excite quite the same old way. ... The number of people engaging with Trump on Twitter - through likes, retweets, quotes and replies - has gradually declined, according to an Associated Press analysis of his feed and the users who read, react and propel his words throughout the Twittersphere. ... Even with the recent tapering off, bursts with exclamation points or capital letters get more favorites and retweets. Tweets mentioning 'Russia' or 'fake news' spark far more interaction than those that don't." <http://apne.ws/2oSyrCg>

-- SPEAKING OF TRUMP'S TWEETS -- @realDonaldTrump at 7:26 p.m.: "North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!" ... **at 10:40 p.m.:** ".@LouDobbs just stated that 'President Trump's successes are unmatched in recent presidential history' Thank you Lou!"

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "North Korea test-fires ballistic missile in defiance of world pressure," by Reuters' Jack Kim and Ju-min Park in Seoul: "North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile on Saturday shortly after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned that failure to curb Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile programs could lead to

'catastrophic consequences.' U.S. and South Korean officials said the test, from an area north of the North Korean capital, appeared to have failed, in what would be the North's fourth straight unsuccessful missile test since March. The test came as the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier group arrived in waters near the Korean peninsula, where it began exercises with the South Korean navy on Saturday, about 12 hours after the failed launch, a South Korean navy official said." <http://reut.rs/2plsUtG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "EU leaders show firm united front ahead of Brexit talks," by AP's Raf Casert and Lorne Cook in Brussels: "European Union leaders vowed Saturday to stand shoulder-to-shoulder behind their negotiating team during the divorce proceedings with Britain and warned that demands from British Prime Minister Theresa May will be dealt with 'firmly.' The 27 EU leaders in Brussels finalized the cornerstones of their negotiating stance within minutes of starting a short summit, a month after the British leader triggered two years of exit talks on March 29. The negotiations themselves are to open shortly after Britain holds an early election on June 8. 'Guidelines adopted unanimously. EU27 firm and fair political mandate for the #Brexit talks is ready,' EU Council President Donald Tusk tweeted." <http://apne.ws/2pg4dT>

TRUMP'S SATURDAY -- Trump will head to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, tonight for a rally. **VP MIKE PENCE** is going to Newport News to attend the christening of the USS Indiana. He's going to Harrisburg as well.

HAPPENING TODAY -- On Trump's 100th day in office, the League of Conservation Voters is joining thousands of people at the People's Climate March in Washington with satellite marches across the country and around the world, to send a message to the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress about their environmental policies.

YOU'RE INVITED -- SEN. JOE MANCHIN (D-W.Va.) will join us for the Playbook Interview Thursday at 9 a.m. at the Washington Court Hotel (525 New Jersey Avenue, NW). The government funding fight will be in full swing, and Manchin will be fighting for coal miner benefits. Manchin is a fascinating figure, and we hope you'll join the conversation, which is being sponsored by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2phgWGu>

SPORTS BLINK -- "John Wall and Wizards turn back Hawks, 115-99, move on to Eastern Conference semifinals," by WaPo's Candace Buckner in Atlanta: "Washington Wizards point guard John Wall ended his night early, walking off the court with the clock stopped late in the final quarter. He deserved the proper ovation for a road villain - hard handshakes from teammates and scattered boos from a salty crowd - after closing out the Atlanta Hawks.

"As the Wizards defeated Atlanta, 115-99, in Game 6 of a first-round playoff series and advance to meet the top-seeded Celtics in the Eastern Conference semifinals, Wall stamped this elimination game with a performance suited for franchise lore. In the final quarter, as the Wizards nearly lost a huge lead, Wall outscored the Hawks by two, pouring in 19 of his game-high 42 points. The performance earned Wall and his team a

date with Boston, where the best-of-seven series starts Sunday at 1 p.m."

<http://wapo.st/2qpQOGJ>

Playbook Reads

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PHOTO DU JOUR: First lady Melania Trump hugs a boy who presented her with a gift during the opening ceremony for the Healing Garden at the Children's National Medical Center on April 28 in Washington, D.C. | Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty

SCOOP - "White House eyeing Clarke for Homeland Security post," by Andrew Restuccia, Josh Dawsey and Daniel Lippman: "The White House is considering David Clarke, the sheriff of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, for a position at the Department of Homeland Security, three people familiar with the administration's planning told POLITICO. Clarke is in line to be appointed as assistant secretary at DHS' Office of Partnership and Engagement, which coordinates outreach to state, local and tribal officials and law enforcement. ... He has come under fire in recent days amid revelations about the case of Terrill Thomas, who died of dehydration last year at the Milwaukee County Jail after guards turned off the water in his cell." <http://politi.co/2oVvZ5T>

-- "Former Director of Anti-Immigration Group Set to Be Named Ombudsman at U.S. Immigration Agency," by ProPublica's Marcelo Rochabrun and Jessica Huseman: "Julie Kirchner is expected to be named as ombudsman to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on Monday ... Kirchner was from 2005 to 2015 director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a group that has advocated for extreme restrictions on immigration." <http://bit.ly/2prMmrD>

-- "White House Weighs Kicking Out Sebastian Gorka," by The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay and Asawin Suebsaeng: "The Trump administration is actively exploring options to remove controversial national security aide Sebastian Gorka from the White House and place him at another federal agency, multiple sources tell The Daily Beast. ... Another said he has been entirely excluded from day-to-day policy-making at the National Security Council in the meantime. Gorka's looming departure from the White House, which one of the sources described as imminent, comes amid mounting controversy over his involvement with a far-right Hungarian group notorious for its collaboration with the Nazi regime during the second World War. ... [T]he White House has been seeking a position for Gorka that does not require a security clearance." <http://thebea.st/2oSFuBP>

-- "Trump names anti-abortion leader Yoest to top HHS post," by Rachana Pradhan: "Charmaine Yoest, tapped to be assistant secretary of public affairs, is a senior fellow at American Values. She is the former president of Americans United for

Life, which has been instrumental in advancing anti-abortion legislation at the state level to restrict access to the procedure. Her appointment was quickly panned by Democratic lawmakers and prominent abortion rights organizations." <http://politi.co/2pguUbb>

FIRST PERSON -- "Our White House Reporters Recall Their Most Vivid Moments of Trump's First 100 Days" -- with vignettes by Mark Landler, Julie Hirschfeld Davis, Glenn Thrush, Maggie Haberman, Mike Shear, Peter Baker: <http://nyti.ms/2pgnrsk>

THE PLAYBOOK INTERVIEW: Jeff Mason

White House Correspondents Association President Jeff Mason didn't know who was going to be president when he ran for the organization's leadership in 2014. Donald Trump wasn't even a candidate at that point. But Trump's White House's almost daily back and forth with the Fourth Estate has thrust the Reuters' reporter into the forefront of major battles over press access.

"We've worked hard since the night president-elect Trump was elected to build a constructive relationship with his team," said Mason, whose term ends in July. "That's the type of thing that we would have highlighted at the correspondents dinner if President Trump and his aides had come to show that despite the significant tension in the relationship between the press corps and the White House we can still come together and we can work together on issues that affect both sides."

Despite Trump and his team skipping the annual dinner tonight, Mason said the show will go on. "I'm confident that it's just going to be a great night and I'm looking forward to celebrating the First Amendment with my colleagues in the White House press corps and our supporters and guests and I am happy that we will be able to show that this dinner is not about the presidency, it's about the press. That's what we are going to show and it's going to be great."

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS -- WHAT SKIPPING WHCD MEANS: "Honestly, I just think it speaks for itself ... It was up to them not to come and the signal they send with that is theirs to send."

DESPITE TENSION, ACCESS GOOD: "Despite a lot of that tension that people see and feel one of the main things that the White House Correspondents Association works on is access for journalists and access under President Trump has been good. We've had several press conferences. We've had lots of opportunities to see the president and his advisors govern and that's important. ... At the beginning of President Trump's administration there were legitimate concerns that we would be moved out of the White House press room or not allowed to fly on Air Force One. Those are things that we fought for and we're still in the press room and the pool is on Air Force One."

W.H. CHECKS IN WITH WHCA: "The results of having worked on a working relationship between the WHCA board and Sean Spicer and his team has been -- they do check in with us when they have questions about something related to the press and

we come to them with our concerns. We both exchange concerns and that doesn't mean the tension has gone away, but there have certainly been dividends of the working relationship. I would describe it as a constructive relationship."

-- **"Trump boycott puts spotlight on correspondents' chief,"** by Hadas Gold:
<http://politi.co/2pg7UsM>

SCRUBBED -- "EPA website removes climate science site from public view after two decades," by WaPo's Chris Mooney and Juliet Eilperin: "The Environmental Protection Agency announced Friday evening that its website would be 'undergoing changes' to better represent the new direction the agency is taking, triggering the removal of several agency websites containing detailed climate data and scientific information. One of the websites that appeared to be gone had been cited to challenge statements made by the EPA's new administrator, Scott Pruitt. ... The changes came less than 24 hours before thousands of protesters were set to march in Washington and around the country in support of political action to push back against the Trump administration's rollbacks of former president Barack Obama's climate policies." ***With a J.P. Freire cameo*** <http://wapo.st/2qirEdW>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Research shows that thriving neighborhoods are key for any city's long-term economic success. Read "No Neighborhood Left Behind" by Mel Martinez, JPMorgan Chase Chairman of the Southeast U.S. and Latin America Regions, in our annual Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2pLN1Uy> *****

MEDIAWATCH - "Advanced Talks Underway For New Conservative Network Amid Fears Fox News Moving Too Far Left," by Mediaite's Rachel Stockman: "On the heels of major shakeups at the Fox News Network, an alternative conservative network is being actively discussed amongst conservative fat cats. A well-placed source close to the proposal tells Mediaite that serious discussions are underway to create an alternative conservative cable network on the belief that the Fox News Network is moving too far to the left. ... The potential aim? Putting 'the old band' back together. There are certainly plenty of (out-of-work?) conservative powerhouses to pick from that could star on a new network, and perhaps even some executives from within Fox News who might be lured by the new opportunity." <http://bit.ly/2oSLE5b>

-- **"Conservative Radio Host Hugh Hewitt in Talks for MSNBC Show, Sources Say,"** by Yashar Ali in NYMag: "MSNBC is in talks with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt about creating a show for him on weekend evenings, four well-placed sources at the network tell Daily Intelligencer. Initially MSNBC was keen on having Hewitt host a program on weekend mornings, but that idea is off the table because Hewitt wants to be on in the evening, according to two sources. At one point, network management also floated moving Joy-Ann Reid's popular weekend program AM Joy to the afternoon to serve as a lead-in for Hewitt and help jumpstart his ratings, but that plan has seemingly been dropped." <http://nym.ag/2prAVAA>

--**"Milo Yiannopoulos Is Starting a New, Ugly, For-Profit Troll Circle,"** by Vanity Fair's Tina Nguyen: "Milo Yiannopoulos, the former tech editor at Breitbart ... told the Hive that he would be launching a new media venture in the coming weeks with what he says is a \$12 million investment from backers whose identities he is protecting ... The business, which will be called Milo Inc., will be even more focused on stoking the sort of ugly political conflict that's closer to the surface than ever in these early months of the Trump administration." <http://bit.ly/2qqiZve>

--**"Fox News Breaks With AP And Top TV Networks For Election Day Polling,"** by HuffPost's Michael Calderone: "Fox News has broken with the National Election Pool, a consortium of five major television networks and The Associated Press that share the costs and results of exit polls for national elections. ... According to the 2016 exit polls, Clinton was expected to win the battleground states of North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida - and in effect, the presidency." <http://huff.to/2plkRgs>

POLITICO PRO hires - Marty Kady and Carrie Budoff Brown email the staff: "Cristina Rivero, graphics reporter, joins the DataPoint team early next month to cover financial services, tax and trade. She has worked as a visual journalist for The Washington Post, New York Times, Philadelphia Inquirer and Los Angeles Times. ... Taylor Thomas is a DataPoint reporter covering financial services, tax and trade. Prior to joining Politico, she worked in communications consulting at Hamilton Place Strategies ... Also next month, Steven Overly is joining the Pro Tech team to cover the tech lobbying and influence beat. Steven comes from The Washington Post, where he's a reporter and editor on the Post's Innovations blog."

--**DAVID ROHDE**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who is now Reuters' national security investigations editor and previously a foreign correspondent and investigative reporter at The New York Times, has been named news director for the New Yorker's website.

LATE-NIGHT BEST - COLBERT's "Late Show": "99 Days in 99 seconds: Here is a look back at the 99-day dumpster fire you just lived through." **2-min. video**
<http://bit.ly/2oVByBh>

CLICKERS - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker - **11 funnies** <http://politi.co/2qeDRAs>

- **"The 100 most Donald Trump quotes about his first 100 days:** 'I really just see the bigness of it all,'" by Shane Goldmacher: <http://politi.co/2oSyNjI>

DATA DU JOUR -- "100 days of Trump claims" - per WaPo Fact Checker: "Trump has been in office for 100 days. As of our latest update on day 98, we've counted 452 false or misleading claims." <http://wapo.st/2plzl01>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"What Bullets Do to Bodies,"** by Jason Fagone in HuffPost Highline: "The gun debate would change in an instant if Americans witnessed the horrors that trauma surgeons confront everyday." <http://huff.to/2qexoZ6> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"Uber vs AirBnB: do you have to be an a**hole to found a brilliant start-up?"** by Ian Leslie in The New Statesman: "Time after time, [Uber founder Travis] Kalanick makes the risky but right decision after rejecting the advice of reasonable colleagues. It takes a certain kind of character to behave like this. Yes, it helps to be brave, resilient, and other admirable things - but it also helps to be an a***hole." <http://bit.ly/2oSU25p>

--**"We Need Conscious Robots,"** by Ryota Kanai in Nautilus Magazine: "How introspection and imagination make robots better." <http://bit.ly/2qmxCtl>

--**"Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un Risk Nuclear War"** - Der Spiegel: "With prospects growing that North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un could soon have long-range nuclear missiles at his disposal, Donald Trump is threatening a military response. Suddenly nuclear war seems possible, but how great is the threat of escalation?" <http://bit.ly/2ptb3pV>

--**"The race to build the world's first sex robot,"** by Jenny Kleeman in The Guardian: "The \$30bn sex tech industry is about to unveil its biggest blockbuster: a \$15,000 robot companion that talks, learns, and never says no." <http://bit.ly/2oPEsGR>

--**"Reverend Resistance,"** by Tommy Tomlinson in Esquire: "After a rousing speech at last summer's Democratic National Convention, Rev. William Barber II might have become the president's pastor. Instead, he's now the face of a progressive Christian protest movement that's taking its fight from North Carolina to the White House." <http://bit.ly/2pboWbR>

--**"Rod Dreher's Monastic Vision,"** by Joshua Rothman in The New Yorker: "An orthodox Christian says his side has lost the culture wars-and argues for a "strategic retreat." <http://bit.ly/2pGcPoH>

--**"My Life As a Failed Artist,"** by Jerry Saltz in New York: "Decades after giving up the dream for good, an art critic returns to the work he'd devoted his life to, then abandoned - but never really forgot." <http://bit.ly/2pG5PrA> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"And Then There Was Hannity,"** by Felix Gillette in Bloomberg Businessweek: "Bill O'Reilly. Roger Ailes. Megyn Kelly. One by one, the biggest personalities at Fox News have left the building." <https://bloom.bg/2oEI1Vd>

--**"The Living Disappeared,"** by Bridget Huber in California Sunday Magazine: "During Argentina's military dictatorship, some 500 babies were born in secret torture centers or kidnapped. A group of grandmothers spent the next four decades searching for them, becoming activists, then icons. But hundreds remained missing. One of them was named Martin." <http://bit.ly/2qegGpG>

--**"The Jew with the Gold Coin,"** by Ewa Tartakowsky in Books & Ideas: "In Poland, one can purchase a strange good luck charm to become rich: the picture of a Jew holding a gold coin. What is the significance of this popular re-appropriation of the figure of the Jew in the context of post-Holocaust Poland? And how conscious are anti-Semitic prejudices in this representation?" <http://bit.ly/2qeeAcd> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"The (Re)selling of Maria Sharapova,"** by Sarah Nicole Prickett in Racquet and Longreads: "On the longevity of Maria Sharapova, who has built a brand beyond the bounds of her tennis stardom that has made her incredibly wealthy, but still striving for more." <http://bit.ly/2oSOKa3>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Justice Elena Kagan, WaPo's Ruth Marcus and Suzy Cohen at their annual Peking Gourmet Inn Birthday Bash, with Judge Merrick Garland and other friends (h/t Matt Gerson) ... Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters yesterday waiting for a cab at Union Station, acoustic guitar in hand ... Gov. Chris Christie this morning in line for Cinnabon at a Maryland 1-95 rest area -- **pic** <http://bit.ly/2pvYX3S>

TRANSITIONS -- Shaylyn Hynes starts on Monday as the press secretary for Secretary Rick Perry's Department of Energy. She was previously communications director for Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas). ... **Maeve Coyle** has started as a senior associate at Precision Strategies; she is an alum of American Bridge 21st Century and the DSCC. ... **Stephen Spaulding** is returning to Common Cause in May as chief of strategy and external relations. He departed the Federal Election Commission this week after serving as special counsel to FEC Commissioner Ann M. Ravel, an outspoken critic of agency.

FUN CLICK -- IJR's White House Correspondents' Yearbook, "The Labrador," this year includes faux snide comments on reporters by President Trump using a red Sharpie. The "Senior Superlatives" section features Playbookers like Jim Acosta, Olivier Knox, Olivia Nuzzi, Zeke Miller, Tara Palmeri "most likely to get yelled at for no reason," Jake Tapper, Jonathan Karl, Glenn Thrush, and Steve Bannon "most likely to never die." <http://bit.ly/2qpB6LG>

WHCD PARTY CIRCUIT -- SPOTTED last night at David and Katherine Bradley's home for their annual dinner to kick off WHCD weekend: Jeff Goldberg, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, VA Secretary David Shulkin, Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (R-N.D.), Sir Richard Branson, Queen Noor, Denis McDonough, Josh Bolten, Susan Rice and Ian Cameron, Jake Sullivan, Lisa Monaco, Frances Townsend, Jen Psaki, Alyse Nelson, Raj Shah, Maya Macguineas, Michael Calderone, Brian Stelter, John Dickerson, Martha Raddatz,

Mary Louise Kelly, Jeremy and Robyn Bash, Megan Murphy and Hilary Rosen, Emily Lenzner, Rob Hendin, Kate Glassman Bennett, Tony Podesta, Jay Carney, Juleanna Glover, Christa Robinson. Big thank you to Steve Clemons and his Playbook shout out! Great conversations had by all at Table 14 with Clemons, Heather Podesta and Stephen Kessler, Sam Feist, Javier Palomarez, Katie Rogers and Pam Stevens.

--**Mother Nature Network** hosted their third annual WHC Jam at the Hamilton last night. This year's event was emceed by CNN's Brooke Baldwin and featured Billy Bob Thornton and the Boxmasters, The Rolling Stone's Chuck Leavell, and four journalist-led bands, with a special appearance by Shark Tank's Kevin O'Leary.

SPOTTED : Molly Ball, Igor Bobic, Steve Clemons, Steve Liesman, Ari Melber, Dana Bash, Tom Fanning, Ari Melber, Bob Costa, Fred and Kim Humphries, Ed O'Keefe, Michael Moroney and Francesca Chambers, Byron Tau, Jon Decker, Neil Chatterjee, Rebecca Haller, Gindy, Suhail Khan and Jana Plat, Heidi Przybyla, Will Rabbe and Brittany Prime, Mary Hager, Lauren Culbertson, Rebecca Blumenstein, Katelyn and Benny Johnson, Elizabeth Landers, Ron and Sara Bonjean, Helene Cooper, David Corn, Maureen Dowd, Rashida Jones, Suzanne Kianpour, Tal Kopan, Bill McQuillen, Ben and Ashley Chang, Carol Lee, Paul Beckett, Kristen Welker, Michael LaRosa, Jesse Rodriguez, Michael Steel, Doug Heye, Keach Hagey, Matt Wolking, Amanda Lee House, Brody Mullins, Paul Kane, Mark Paustenbach, Brianna Keilar, Rodell Mollineau, James Grimaldi, Erik Smith and Edith Gregson, Tim and Kiki Burger, Robbie Myers, Nikki Schwab, Ellen Mitchell, Nihal Krishan.

SPOTTED at the United Talent Agency party at Fiola Mare, hosted by Jay Sures and Dan Abrams: Chris Licht, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), Paul Strauss, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), Padma Lakshmi, Ilyse Hogue, Don Lemon, Nolan Gould, Tammy Haddad, Jake Tapper, Brian Kilmeade, Jessica Williams, Mike Allen, Dana Bash, Maria and Fabio Trabocchi, Kal Penn, Jim and Autumn Vandehei, Billy Bob Thornton, Matthew Modine, Jeanne Wolak, Kimball Stroud and David White, René Jones, Jim Acosta, Mike Brune, Tim Burger, Patricia Murphy, Raúl Alvarill, Lauren Pratapas, Bob Draper and Kirsten Powers, Nick Owens, Heather Podesta, Steve Clemons, Cenk Uygur, Tara Palmeri, Michael Grynbaum, Andrew Green, Steve Hilton, Mark Ein, Gary and Mary Dell'Abate, Amb. Howard Gutman, Jon Ledecy.

SPOTTED at the Capitol File party at the British Ambassador's residence: Amb. Kim and Lady Darroch, Lee Satterfield and Patrick Steel, Missy Biden and Rod O'Connor, Penny Lee, Tammy Haddad, Janet Donovan, John McCarthy, Eun Yang, Marc Adelman, Melissa Moss, Tony Podesta, Nick Schmit, Eric Fanning, Sid Mashburn, Tracy and Adam Bernstein, Pete Selfridge and Parita Shah, Geoff and Ann Morrell, Clyde Tuggle and Mary Streett, Matt Mowers, Brian Hook, Jonathan Karl, Zeke Miller, Kasie Hunt, Ashley Parker, David Urban, Marty Obst, Robert Allbritton, Irish Amb. Anne Anderson, Meredith Merrill, Kimball Stroud, Erin McPike, Maria Teresa Kumar, Kelly Collis, Sara and Ron Bonjean, Mark and Sally Ein, Jeff Zeleny, Tanya Snyder and Kiersten Allen, Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.), Lesli Foster, Jim and Autumn VandeHei, Capricia Marshall.

SPOTTED at last night's "A Toast to the First Amendment" party hosted by RealClearPolitics, Distilled Spirits Council, National Restaurant Association and Beer Institute: Carl Cannon, Brian Stelter, Lynn Sweet, Mike Memoli, Michael Calderone, Zeke Miller, Justin Sink, Emily Goodin, Carl Bernstein, Ted Johnson, Felicia Schwartz, Michael LaRosa, John McIntyre, Tom Bevan, Niels Lesniewski, AshLee Strong, Francesca Chambers, Jeff Davis, Judy Davis, Frank Coleman, Lauren French, Jim McGreevy, Erin Waters, Kraig Naasz, Kevin Madden, Craig Gordon, Edie Emery, Steve Danon, Cicely Simpson, Barbara Polk, Tommy Burr, Josh and Blair Holmes, Matt Gorman, Virginia Coyne, Jesse Rodriguez, Elise Foley, Jesse Hunt, Neil Grace, Michael and Mary Kathryn Steel, Abby Livingston, Molly Ball, Rebecca Berg and Brendan Buck, Kurt Bardella, Laurent Crenshaw, Fred Hill, Jesse Rodriguez, Kevin Madden, A.B Stoddard, Trent Edwards, Matt Walker, Leslie Shedd, Mariel Saez, Adam Hodge, Benny Johnson, Doug Heye, Jeremy Adler, Colin Reed, Brian Rogers, Joe Pounder, Jesse Hunt, Guy Benson, Matt Mowers and Cassie Spodak, Matt Haller, John Ashbrook.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Emily Staniszewski, SVP at Global Strategy Group and an Ogilvy alum, and **Brian Staniszewski** welcomed Benjamin Robert Staniszewski, born at 11:02 p.m. last Saturday, weighing in at 7 lbs., 3 oz., and 20.5 inches long. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2qeEcWG>

BIRTHDAYS: NBC News' Hallie Jackson (hat tip: Frank Thorp) ... Julie Whiston, outgoing executive director and chief administrator of the White House Correspondents' Association since 1995, who has carried the torch for 22 annual dinners ... Melody Barnes, co-founder and principal at MBSquared Solutions, senior fellow at UVA's Miller Center; and an Obama alum ... Reggie Love, Obama's former body man and VP/partner at Transatlantic Holdings, is 35 ... Nadeam Elshami, celebrating by spending quality time with his family and their new puppy, Bric (h/t Drew Hammill) ... Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) is 67 ... Anatole Jenkins, an Obama reelect alum who worked on Clinton's campaign in Nevada and North Carolina during the primary and led coordinated efforts for Clinton in Minnesota during the general (h/t Tyler Barnes) ... NBC News digital reporter Alexandra Villarreal (h/t Colby Bermel) ... Karen Dynan, nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute, Treasury alum, and wife of the fabulous Doug Elmendorf ... Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) is 63 ... Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) is 71 ... Jerome Davis ... Peter Kiley, VP at C-SPAN ... Quinn Bradlee (Josiah Quinn Crowninshield Bradlee), son of Benjamin Crowninshield Bradlee and Sally Quinn, is 35 - he's celebrating with friends at Cafe Milano as he always does ... Jeannie Etchart ... Eric Pierce, former chief of staff to the Secretary of the Air Force and a CNAS, Ben Nelson and NSC alum ... Ari Isaacman Bevacqua, director of communications at the NYT (h/t Jordan Cohen) ... Damien LaVera ... Allison Zelman, co-founder of Citizen 44 ... Michael Castine of Ridgeway Partners and a Reagan WH and NSC alum ... Jeff Poor, editor of Breitbart TV, is 41 ... Dawn Kopecki, business editor at the San Antonio Express-News and a Bloomberg alum ... Gentry Collins, partner at CAP Public Affairs ... Gabriel Gatehouse, foreign correspondent for Newsnight on BBC2, based in London, formerly posted in E Africa, Libya, Iraq, Russia/Ukraine ... DNC and DCCC alum Alex Wright ... former Rep. Jim Ryun (R-Kans.) is 7-0 ... Courtney

Chandler, deputy press secretary for Sen. Blumenthal ...

... **Josh Sharp**, co-founder and managing director, advertising at Advoc8, who celebrated at Jack Rose last night and announced to friends that he and wife Melissa are expecting their first child this November (h/t Pounder) ... David Gelber, a "60 Minutes" alum and now founding executive producer of Emmy-award winning "Years of Living Dangerously" on Showtime (h/t Jon Meyersohn) ... Pat Shortridge, a Rubio alum, is 5-0 ... Nate Sandals, Harvard Law grad and a Durbin alum ... Gail Hoffman, president of The Hoffman Group and spox for family of Jim and Sarah Brady, and advisor to law enforcement leaders across the country ... WaPo photographer Melina Mara ... Geng Ngarmboonant of Bain and a Yale Daily News, Brookings, and WaPo alum ... Meg Greenhalgh ... Kara Panzer, analyst at Goldman Sachs ... Kristen Day, executive director at Democrats for Life of America ... Lynne Weil, comms. director and senior policy advisor for Rep. Diane DeGette (D-Colo.), celebrating by joining in the Climate March (after a traditional Swedish-style birthday breakfast in bed, of course (hubby tip: Nils Bruzelius) ... Cara Morris Stern of New Paradigm Strategy Group ... Kate Whitworth, daughter of Kirk and Beth Whitworth ... Nick Horrock ... Winslow Morris Noel, son of Jon and Kate Disston Noel ... Matt Onek ... Scott Shadian, managing partner/CEO at Sayara ... Evelyn Call ... Dan Bayens ... Rob Hoppin, president and CEO of Hillenby ... Rob Bassin, political director at AIPAC, who is responsible for so many consultants, staffers and members getting to visit Israel ... Jennifer Ford (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Rich Folkers is 58 ... John Gonsalves ... Jim Merlino ... disgraced financier Bernie Madoff is 79 ... Jerry Seinfeld is 63 ... Daniel Day-Lewis is 6-0 ... Michelle Pfeiffer is 59 ... Uma Thurman is 47 ... International Tennis Hall of Famer Andre Agassi is 47 (h/ts AP)

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: President Donald Trump. Panel: Julie Pace, Ed O'Keefe, Major Garrett and Margaret Brennan ... preview of live CBS "This Morning" broadcast from the White House with Norah O'Donnell and Charlie Rose

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Vice President Mike Pence ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Sen. Angus King (I-Maine). Panel: Helene Cooper, Chris Matthews, Danielle Pletka and Nicolle Wallace

--**Fox News Sunday**: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.). Panel: Michael Needham, Donna Edwards, Rich Lowry and Juan Williams ... "Power Player of the Week" with ATF chief of firearms operations division Jim Ferguson

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... comedian Samantha Bee. Panel: Ana Navarro, Van Jones, Jennifer Granholm and Rick Santorum

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Guests to be announced

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: Carl Bernstein, Politico's Tara Palmeri, Jason

Miller and the Chicago Sun-Times' Lynn Sweet ... The New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet ... The Washington Post's Erik Wemple and CNN's Dylan Byers (live from Washington)

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) ... Texas Gov. Greg Abbott ... IBM CEO Ginni Rometty ... Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas). Panel: Maslansky + Partners president Lee Carter and Global Strategy group senior vice president Steve Sigmund

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Sean Spicer ... Erin McPike ... Mollie Hemingway ... Joe Trippi ... Liz Claman

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Julie Pace, Karen Tumulty, Manu Raju and Maeve Reston

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Former Obama White House National Security Adviser Susan Rice ... Canadian Foreign Affairs minister Chrystia Freeland

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-Ill.). Panel: Bill Richardson and former Puerto Rican attorney general Jose Fuentes and former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Otto Reich ... Univision news anchor Enrique Acevedo ... actor and producer Eugenio Derbez and actress Salma Hayek ... human rights activist and Catholic Priest Rev. Alejandro Solalinde ... actress Kate Del Castillo

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: American Enterprise Institute Center for Internet, Communications and Technology Policy director Jeffrey Eisenach and Public Knowledge vice president Chris Lewis ... **"Newsmakers"**: Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), questioned by Politico's Esther Whieldon and CQ Roll Call's Bridget Bowman ... **"Q&A"**: Author and law professor Brad Snyder

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2mGabdq>: "Shattered" co-author Jonathan Allen ... Daily Beast columnist Matt Lewis.

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** The corporate responsibility strategy and approach was developed, tested and refined at JPMorgan Chase through efforts on the ground in communities around the world. Learn more about the company's model in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2pMVfi8> *****

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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Thur 4/27/2017 11:05:02 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: PUNT: GOP readies a one-week government funding bill -- NAFTA here to stay -- PLAYBOOK INTERVIEW: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin -- EXCLUSIVE: Ivanka's new book's preface -- WHCA weekend party guide

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/27/2017 06:58 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

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Good Thursday morning. And welcome to the beginning of the White House Correspondents Dinner weekend.

PLAYBOOK EXCLUSIVE -- IVANKA TRUMP'S NEW BOOK PREFACE -- Ivanka Trump has said she won't be doing the typical press and tour for her upcoming book "Women Who Work: Rewriting the Rules for Success," but the first daughter did write the preface to the book just days before her father's inauguration.

-- **EXCERPT OF THE PREFACE** : "At the time I was writing this book, my father was running for president of the United States. ... Inspiring and empowering women who work -- at all aspects of their lives -- has been my mission throughout my entire career. Today, I have the opportunity to take that work to new heights and advocate for change on a far greater scale than I'd ever imagined...

"**[I] will take a formal leave of absence** from both The Trump Organization and my apparel and accessories brand. On paper, this separation is straightforward, but emotionally, this was not an easy decision for me to make. I have known since I was a child that I wanted to be a developer and an entrepreneur. It is difficult to step away from businesses that I have worked hard to build and that I believe in so fully, but the potential to improve the lives of countless women and girls has caused me to

fundamentally consider where my work will do the greatest good.

"I recognize the privilege and responsibility I have to use my voice to make positive impact where I can. I am committed to working harder than ever to help unleash the full power of women and girls to accelerate the pace of progress both in our country and around the world -- and I look forward to furthering the cause together." ***The full preface*** <http://politi.co/2pkZ4Zb> ... **\$14.56 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2pC6omu>

BIG THINGS HAPPENING -- We expect Congress to pass a week-long stop-gap government funding bill. That means a shutdown will be averted, giving the two parties time to iron out more details, but pushing this crisis into another week. That's a bad sign for other legislative priorities. By the way: no money was included to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

-- **RACHAEL BADE** and **JOHN BRESNAHAN** posted a story at 12:49 a.m., which says a vote on the new health-care bill is "increasingly unlikely this week" because moderates still remain opposed to the measure. <http://politi.co/2pozBjY> Speaker Paul Ryan moved to strip from the bill language that exempted lawmakers' health care from the new bill.

WHAT WE HEAR -- THE WHITE HOUSE is pushing extremely hard for a vote this week, which has sent the GOP leadership team into a frenzy. On the Hill, the push is seen as illogical. But still, there are those in senior levels of Republican leadership who see a vote as a possibility this week. The text of the legislation has been posted, so they can vote at any time, in theory. The mantra on Capitol Hill is: when you have the votes, you vote. But the GOP clearly doesn't at this moment. There is some buzz about a Saturday vote, which would, of course, be pretty ripe with drama. No one likes working on the weekends. Will this bill ever get through? It looks more likely than ever, but it's miles and miles from a sure thing. But, as one conservative aide told us on the Hill yesterday, Republicans are as close as ever to repealing Obamacare. At the moment, it's not conservatives standing in the way, it's moderates.

-- **THE STAKES:** The White House wants to show progress by passing the bill. (They'll never be able to muscle Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) like they are House leaders). House leadership, of course, wants to make good on their promise to repeal Obamacare, and recover from pulling the bill a few weeks ago. The conservative Freedom Caucus -- which has never dug into legislation like this -- wants to show they aren't only a roadblock, but could be a legislative player.

-- **FOR THE PRESIDENT -- THE WHIP LIST:** Republicans can lose roughly 22 lawmakers and still pass this bill. At least 10 have said they're not so hot on it. Here's the list of 10 lawmakers who have expressed their opposition in the last few days, from a Democratic strategist trying to defeat the bill. Of course, this could change at any moment. **Rep. Jeff Denham (Calif.)** (<http://bit.ly/2qaKNl0>), **Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Fla.)** (<http://bit.ly/2p6H9XU>), **Rep. Thomas Massie (Ky.)** (<http://bit.ly/2poDh57>), **Rep. Frank LoBiondo (N.J.)** (<http://politi.co/2qaqDHY>), **Rep. Leonard Lance (N.J.)** (<http://politi.co/2qaqDHY>), **Rep. Dan Donovan (N.Y.)** (<http://politi.co/2oOThtS>), **Rep.**

Brian Fitzpatrick (Pa.) (<http://bit.ly/2oz7kbc>), **Rep. Charlie Dent (Pa.)** (<http://washex.am/2p6VLul>), **Rep. Barbara Comstock** (<http://bit.ly/2oLTPQw>), **Rep. Andy Biggs (Ariz.)** (<http://bit.ly/2oOGB6d>). **SUPPORTERS NOW WAFFLING** : Reps. Mike Coffman (Colo.), Ryan Costello (Pa.), Mario Diaz Balart (Fla.) and Tom Reed (N.Y.). **SUPPORTERS WHO HAVEN'T COMMENTED**: Reps. David Young (Iowa), Chris Smith (N.J.), Mark Amodei (Nev.), John Katko (N.Y.), Jaime Herrera Beutler (Wash.).

NAFTA? NOT DEAD AFTER ALL -- "Trump Tells Foreign Leaders That Nafta Can Stay for Now," by NYT's Mark Landler and Binyamin Appelbaum: "President Trump told the leaders of Mexico and Canada on Wednesday that he would not immediately move to terminate the North American Free Trade Agreement, only hours after an administration official said he was likely to sign an order that would begin the process of pulling the United States out of the deal.

"In what the White House described as 'pleasant and productive' evening phone calls with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, Mr. Trump said he would quickly start the process of renegotiating Nafta -- not abandon it, as he said he would do during the 2016 presidential campaign if he could not rework the deal to his satisfaction.

"It is my privilege to bring NAFTA up-to-date through renegotiation ,' Mr. Trump said in a statement issued by the White House at 10:33 p.m. 'I believe that the end result will make all three countries stronger and better.' ... The suggestion of withdrawal, reported by Politico on Wednesday, raised anxieties in financial markets. The peso fell more than 2 percent against the dollar, and the Canadian dollar fell about 0.3 percent." <http://nyti.ms/2pCdxD3>

MUST READ -- "Trump Unveils Broad Tax-Cut Plan: Broad package seeks to spark sustained 3% economic growth; Democrats hint at objections," by WSJ's Rich Rubin: "With Wednesday's proposals -- which include a 15% tax rate for all businesses, lower individual rates, a bigger standard deduction to benefit middle-income households and the repeal of the estate and alternative minimum taxes -- Mr. Trump hopes to speed up economic growth and make his mark as a historic tax cutter. Still, the sweeping tax plan departed in important ways from congressional Republican proposals and alienated Democrats, giving the president a narrow path to victory through Congress. ...

"The [plan, which was crafted by advisers is] an outline that is heavy on ambition, light on technical detail and likely to drive up budget deficits. ...

"Despite their broad support for the plan, Republicans cautioned that differences remained to be worked through, and they have little margin to lose members of their own party. Republicans are split on how big a tax cut they think is feasible and what tax breaks should go away, and there are plenty of details that may divide GOP lawmakers along regional lines. Sen. Richard Shelby (R., Ala.) said he would remain wary until he saw what it would cost and how it would be paid for. 'If it's not paid for, were going to run

a huge deficit, and we don't want to do that,' Mr. Shelby said."

<http://on.wsj.com/2pC0Qs1>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** "A critical and deliberate part of our strategy is strengthening the underlying organizations and systems that are needed to empower communities to deliver and sustain change," notes JPMorgan Chase Head of Corporate Responsibility, Peter Scher. Learn more from this approach in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report <http://politi.co/2ouiWI5> *****

PLAYBOOK INTERVIEW: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin

Steven Mnuchin is a new player in Washington, but he's already been thrust into President Donald Trump's top priority: overhauling the tax code. As part of Trump's 100-day push, Mnuchin and other top White House officials laid out the broad brushstrokes for Trump's vision for tax reform -- they are calling it "the largest tax cut in the history." The devil, of course, is always in the details when trying to get things done in Washington. Mnuchin said the Treasury Department has more than 100 people focused on crunching the numbers for tax reform and they have had regular meetings with the House and Senate tax writing panels.

"I think this is all about creating economic growth, creating jobs and this is really the president's priority," Mnuchin said in a Playbook Interview following the rollout. "We're excited to move forward fast. We had a very productive meeting [Tuesday] night at the Senate with the leadership and we're committed to working with them closely to go through all the details and turning this into a bill that can be passed and the president can sign."

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

TRUMP WILL TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE: "I think it's clear that the president has strong views on tax reform and will be playing a leadership role, but this is an absolute partnership with the House and the Senate to get this done."

EXPECT MASSIVE CUTS: "On the personal side what we announced [Wednesday], is that our intention is to keep the mortgage interest deduction and keep charitable deductions. Those are two things that we think are just critically important. The housing markets are a very big part of the economy. We want to continue to encourage people to support charitable contributions, but a starting point is we're cutting everything else. That's a pretty massive change. On the business side, we're going to be going through and again we'll come back with the details, but in return for lowering rates we are going to get rid of a bunch of deductions."

DEMOCRATS ARE WELCOME: "I hope there are a lot of Democrats that cross the aisle and support this. I don't know why they wouldn't since this is about creating jobs for Americans and making American business competitive and creating a middle income tax cut, so I hope that's the case. If it's not the case, we'll consider using reconciliation."

FIRST STEP IS LISTENING SESSIONS: "We're starting with listening sessions ... I think we'll move this forward. And again, as I said, I'm hopeful that there are Democrats who come on board."

THIS BILL IS GOOD NEWS FOR K STREET: "We've reached out to lots and lots of business groups, small businesses, big businesses from all different sectors and we'll continue to take input both from the Hill and people in the economy."

JOSH DAWSEY, SHANE GOLDMACHER AND ALEX ISENSTADT on Trump's 100 Days: **"The education of Donald Trump":** "The 70-year-old leader of the free world sat behind his desk in the Oval Office last Friday afternoon, doing what he's done for years: selling himself. His 100th day in office was approaching, and Trump was eager to reshape the hardening narrative of a White House veering off course. So he took it upon himself to explain that his presidency was actually on track, inviting a pair of POLITICO reporters into the Oval Office for an impromptu meeting. He sat at the Resolute desk, with his daughter Ivanka across from him. One aide said the chat was off-the-record, but Trump insisted, over objections from nervous-looking staffers, that he be quoted.

"He addressed the idea that his senior aides weren't getting along. He called out their names and, one by one, they walked in, each surprised to see reporters in the room-chief of staff Reince Priebus, then chief strategist Steve Bannon, and eventually senior adviser Jared Kushner. 'The team gets along really, really well,' he said. He turned to his relationships with world leaders. 'I have a terrific relationship with Xi,' he said, referring to the Chinese president, who Trump recently invited for a weekend visit at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

"Finally, he rattled off the biggest hits of his first three months and promised more to come. It was classic Trump: Confident, hyperbolic and insistent on asserting control. But interviews with nearly two dozen aides, allies, and others close to the president paint a different picture - one of a White House on a collision course between Trump's fixed habits and his growing realization that this job is harder than he imagined when he won the election on Nov. 8." <http://politi.co/2p6VJyr>

TIM ALBERTA in Politico Magazine, "Social Conservatives Are 'Over the Moon' About Trump: Nearly 100 days into his presidency, Donald Trump has become the unlikely champion of the Christian right: "Once a punch line in conservative circles and a walking worst-case-scenario for many on the religious right, Donald Trump has emerged in the early days of his administration as something else entirely: a crusader for traditional social values." <http://politi.co/2poD81l>

HMM - "Exclusive interview: Trump 'absolutely' looking at breaking up 9th Circuit," by Washington Examiner's Sarah Westwood: "Absolutely, I have," Trump said of considering 9th Circuit breakup proposals during a far-ranging interview with the Washington Examiner at the White House. 'There are many people that want to break up the 9th Circuit. It's outrageous.'" <http://washex.am/2q9883m>

-- **FOR THE RECORD:** This won't happen.

THE JUICE ...

-- **JORDAN LIERMAN** is launching Civic Advisors, a social-impact strategy and consulting group to work with "mission driven companies, non-profits, philanthropy, advocacy organizations and sports and entertainment leaders." The group's work includes Obama and Biden legacy initiatives like It's On Us, Better Make Room and the effort to make two-years of community college free. And, they're working with UNICEF USA and have partnered with talent management agency Montag Group on social responsibility in sports. The veteran Obama-Biden staffer is teaming up with 16 White House alums, including Alex Sopko, Elias Alcantara, Noland Chambliss, Devin Hampton, Hannah Hankins, Marie Harf and David Heifetz, among others.
<http://bit.ly/2pC2nye>

-- **NBC'S CHUCK TODD** has an exclusive interview with Vice President Mike Pence Saturday to air on Sunday's "Meet the Press."

-- **THE CAFE MILANO CROWD, WED. NIGHT EDITION:** At separate tables: Lyndon Boozar, Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Vinoda Basnayake, CNN Chairman Jeff Zucker dining with Wolf Blitzer.

-- **FIRST LOOK: SEN. JEANNE SHAHEEN** (D-N.H.), the only woman on Senate Foreign Relations and a member of the Armed Services Committee, will deliver a keynote speech today at noon on Russia's attacks on the U.S. democracy and the need for a strategy to fight back. **Excerpt**: "Putin's challenge to us is about more than hacking America's democracy. The architecture of alliances and partnerships that has been at the heart of America's national security for more than seven decades is also at risk. This is not acceptable. We need a bolder, more aggressive strategy for punishing Russia and countering its efforts to undermine our democracies. I believe this strategy should have at least four components: imposing more rigorous sanctions, bolstering NATO, demonstrating stronger support for Ukraine, and countering the Russian propaganda juggernaut."

-- **REP. JOE CROWLEY (D-N.Y.)** is also speaking today to the Center for American Progress Action Fund on a theme of "broken promises and President Trump's first 100 days": "Since election day, I've struggled to reconcile what voters told us, and what Democrats stand for. That's because Democrats are the ones focused on lifting up hardworking Americans. But unfortunately, too many Americans didn't hear us - they don't believe that we share their same vision for America. So, I think that's how we got to this point - Donald Trump was able to capitalize at the right moment, when people were looking for someone to make these kinds of promises. As hard as it's been for Democrats, we have to acknowledge that for whatever reason, people were listening to this guy - because he was telling them what they wanted to hear."

-- **JON ALLEN** and **AMIE PARNES'** "Shattered" is No. 1 on the combined print/e-book NYT best-seller list. **SEN. ELIZABETH WARREN** is No. 1 on the non-fiction list, and No. 2 on the combined list.

HEADS UP -- "Metro workers planning 'sick-out' Friday," by WaPo's Martine Powers: "Members of Metro's largest labor union are planning a 'sick-out' Friday to protest the transit agency's new absenteeism policy. Metro said in a statement that the agency had received nearly 500 requests for advance absences for Friday, 'a rate that is many times higher than normal.' All of those requests were denied. 'We expect to offer full bus and rail service for our customers as scheduled on Friday,' Metro said in a statement." <http://wapo.st/2p6N6nG>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS -- PLAYBOOK EXCHANGE EVENT IN SAN FRANCISCO -- We're coming to San Francisco May 10 for conversations over cocktails. We're looking forward to talking with **HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER KEVIN MCCARTHY (R-CALIF.)** in his home state. California Playbookers Carla Marinucci and David Siders will chat with **CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL XAVIER BECERRA** and we'll also lead a conversation with **REP. ERIC SWALWELL (D-CALIF.)**. Interested in attending or learning more? **Email us** politicolive@politico.com

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former Vice President Joe Biden laughs after handing the ball to a referee in the second half of a NBA playoff game between the Washington Wizards and the Atlanta Hawks at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., on April 26. | Rob Carr/Getty Images

DEEP DIVE -- NYT A1, "Bribe Cases, a Jared Kushner Partner and Potential Conflicts: President Trump's son-in-law, a top adviser, had help building a real estate empire from a member of one of Israel's wealthiest families," by Jesse Drucker: "It was the summer of 2012, and Jared Kushner was headed downtown. His family's real estate firm, the Kushner Companies, would spend about \$190 million over the next few months on dozens of apartment buildings in tony Lower Manhattan neighborhoods including the East Village, the West Village and SoHo. For much of the roughly \$50 million in down payments, Mr. Kushner turned to an undisclosed overseas partner. Public records and shell companies shield the investor's identity. But, it turns out, the money came from a member of Israel's Steinmetz family, which built a fortune as one of the world's leading diamond traders.

"A Kushner Companies spokeswoman and several Steinmetz representatives say Raz Steinmetz, 53, was behind the deals. His uncle, and the family's most prominent

figure, is the billionaire Beny Steinmetz, who is under scrutiny by law enforcement authorities in four countries. In the United States, federal prosecutors are investigating whether representatives of his firm bribed government officials in Guinea to secure a multibillion dollar mining concession. In Israel, Mr. Steinmetz was detained in December and questioned in a bribery and money laundering investigation. In Switzerland and Guinea, prosecutors have conducted similar inquiries. ... Dealings with the Steinmetz family could create complications for Mr. Kushner. The Justice Department, led by Trump appointees, oversees the investigation into Beny Steinmetz."

<http://nyti.ms/2qi60Wv>

REPLACING JASON CHAFFETZ -- "GOP's latest Freedom Caucus headache: Oversight chairmanship," by Rachael Bade and John Bresnahan: "Speaker Paul Ryan and House GOP leaders are facing their worst nightmare: a Freedom Caucus-run House committee. But Trey Gowdy might bail them out. House Oversight Chairman Jason Chaffetz's announcement last week that he might soon resign from Congress has triggered a behind-the-scenes battle for one of the highest-profile chairmanships on Capitol Hill. And the power vacuum has the potential to cause GOP leaders serious heartburn.

"[Ohio Rep. Jim] Jordan is next in line if the most senior member, Rep. Jimmy Duncan of Tennessee, decides not to run. Former Oversight Chairman Darrell Issa of California is third in seniority, but he's chaired the panel before. So GOP leaders could face a quandary whether to reward someone whose past behavior has tripped up their agenda and infuriated most of the GOP conference. Jordan wouldn't say whether he would run, though people close to him believe he will. 'We'll see,' was all Jordan would say when asked Wednesday whether he wanted the gavel. 'Right now, Chaffetz is the chairman, and I want to continue to support the chairman.' ...

"GOP leaders and their allies are so worried about a Jordan candidacy that they've begun buttonholing Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) -- the former chairman of the House Benghazi Committee and a dark-horse candidate for the Oversight post -- to run, according to multiple House sources. While Gowdy often jokes that he hates the high-profile nature of his job and would rather be home watching Hallmark movies with his wife, insiders say he is now considering a bid." <http://politi.co/2q9lxbF>

-- JUST SAYING ... This whole Jason Chaffetz thing is getting weirder by the day. He announced he would not run again, and then started hinting he'd resign early. He spoke with Jake and told him he wanted to make money, and would love a TV contract. Last night, he posted on Instagram (<http://bit.ly/2p6EAFo>) that he's having a plate and screws removed from his foot or else he would be "at risk for serious infection." He said he'd be gone for between three and five weeks. **WE HEAR ...** Chaffetz met with Speaker Paul Ryan last night.

******* A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Research shows that thriving neighborhoods are key for any city's long-term economic success. Read "No Neighborhood Left Behind" by Mel Martinez, JPMorgan Chase Chairman of the

Southeast U.S. and Latin America Regions, in our annual Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2pLN1Uy> *****

HILL WATCH -- "House Russia investigators agree on schedule, get new access to documents after 'reset,'" by CNN's Tom LoBianco, Manu Raju and Jeremy Herb: "The House Russia investigation is not just back on track, it's chugging on -- with an agreed-upon plan to call high-profile witnesses from the campaign of President Donald Trump, new access to intelligence documents and plans to work longer hours in Washington. ... House Russia investigation leader Mike Conaway ... and Rep. Adam Schiff, the lead Democrat on the investigation, met and agreed on a likely witness schedule, culled from a witness list that investigators say includes 3-4 dozen names." <http://cnn.it/2qhHc0P>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY - "Democrats turn the screws on border wall builders: The idea is to punish businesses that work on Donald Trump's project," by California Playbooker David Siders: "Democrats in cities and statehouses across the country are pressing forward with a calculated, long-range effort designed to undermine Trump's plan by turning the screws on the businesses that work on the project. In California, Democratic lawmakers on Tuesday advanced a measure to bar the state from awarding contracts to any company involved in the wall's construction, while a bill to prevent the state's massive pension funds from investing in those companies stands pending. Lawmakers introduced similar measures in New York and Rhode Island. The city of San Francisco is considering a blacklist, and Berkeley adopted one last month." <http://politi.co/2oOXONd>

-- FOR YOUR RADAR: "Isis faces exodus of foreign fighters as its 'caliphate' crumbles," by The Guardian's Martin Chulov in Istanbul, Jamie Grierson in London and Jon Swaine in New York: "Large numbers of foreign fighters and sympathisers are abandoning Islamic State and trying to enter Turkey, with at least two British nationals and a US citizen joining an exodus that is depleting the ranks of the terror group. ... Dozens [of] foreigners have fled in recent weeks, most caught as they tried to cross the frontier, as Isis's capacity to hold ground in Syria and Iraq collapses. Some - it is not known how many - are thought to have evaded capture and made it across the border into Turkey." <http://bit.ly/2qaLZEL>

COUNTERPROGRAMMING -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- Americans for Responsible Solutions, the anti-gun violence PAC started by former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), who survived a constituent shooting in 2011, and her husband Mark Kelly, is out with a new report "Dangerous and Deceptive: The State of the Gun Lobby in 2017." The effort comes as the National Rifle Association is holding its annual convention, which Trump is slated to speak at Friday. **The report** <http://bit.ly/2potDiQ> ... **Release** <http://politi.co/2q9lGfd>

ISLAND SWAP -- "John Kerry is switching islands," by Boston Globe's Mark Arsenault and Mark Shanahan: "Could a Nantucket guy ever really be happy on Martha's Vineyard? ... Last year, Kerry and his wife put their Nantucket compound on

the market, and in March, the couple bought an historic waterfront home in Chilmark, the up-island Vineyard town where the Obama family retreated for summer vacation when they inhabited the White House. Kerry's exclusive new enclave at Seven Gates Farm is remote and secluded, far from the crowds that jam Edgartown and Oak Bluffs in the summer. The sale was first reported by the Vineyard Gazette." <http://bit.ly/2poPQNP>

MEDIAWATCH - "Daniel Halper joins Drudge Report," by Hadas Gold and Daniel Lippman: "Matt Drudge, the founder and editor of the influential site DrudgeReport.com, has hired Daniel Halper, two sources familiar with the move confirmed to POLITICO. Halper was most recently Washington bureau chief of The New York Post, a position he held for just under a year. Halper was previously online editor at the conservative magazine The Weekly Standard and in 2014 published the book 'Clinton Inc.'" <http://politi.co/2pAMCaH>

-- **per Morning Media: ALEXANDER MARQUARDT** is joining CNN as a senior national correspondent. The ABC news veteran, who's spent the last decade as a foreign correspondent based out of Beirut, Jerusalem and Moscow, will shift his beat stateside, covering domestic and breaking news out of New York.

-- **ERICA ORDEN** is leaving the Wall Street Journal's headquarters in New York to move to D.C. to join the paper's politics team as a White House investigative reporter.

BRET STEPHENS INTERVIEW - "The NYT's new columnist defends his views on Arabs, Black Lives Matter, campus rape," by Vox's Jeff Stein: <http://bit.ly/2qhCvnx>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- Joe Biden courtside last night at the Wizards-Hawks game. The former VP was sitting with Mark Ein, and exchanged pleasantries with Playbook Palm Beach correspondent Luke Russert. Biden -- or Russert, we're not sure -- got a standing ovation. ... former Bush White House Counsel and Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers yesterday in the Longworth House Office Building ... Valerie Jarrett yesterday going into Blue Duck Tavern, which is right across from the Obama offices in the West End.

OUT AND ABOUT - The Food Policy Action Education Fund and the Environmental Working Group hosted more than 30 award-winning chefs at their Plate of the Union Farm Bill Summit on Wednesday at Republic Restoratives Distillery in Northeast D.C. Top chefs and food policy leaders met to talk about the farm bill. The summit ended with a lively reception kicked off by Michelin-star chef Jose Andres. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2pC232y> ... <http://bit.ly/2qb5VY7> **SPOTTED:** Food Policy Action co-founder Tom Colicchio, Chef and Bizarre Foods host Andrew Zimmern, Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.), Rep.

Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), EWG Chairman Ken Cook and the James Beard Foundation's Katherine Miller.

--**SPOTTED** at last night's kickoff party for the 2017 Congressional Women's Softball Game, held at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Capitol Hill townhouse: Reps. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.), Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.), Martha Roby (R-Ala.), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Lynn Sweet, Emmarie Huetteman, Amy Walter, Brianna Keilar, Elena Schneider, Lisa Desjardins, Atalie Ebersole of Grant Thornton, Aimee Vargas of Anheuser-Busch, Tom Manatos of Spotify and Jenn Richey of Young Survival Coalition.

--On Wednesday evening, David Litt and Brad Jenkins of Funny or Die hosted the writers from "Full Frontal" for drinks at The Gibson. **SPOTTED**: Travon Free, Mike Memoli, Hadas Gold, Ben Chang, Olivia Pavco Giaccia, Alexis Krieg, Ashley Chang, Sopan Deb, Heather Wild, Luis Miranda, Jon Ward.

SPOTTED last night at the Tribeca Film Festival premiere of "From The Ashes," a documentary about coal (**trailer**: <http://bit.ly/2oOXIFd>): Mike Bloomberg, John Kerry, Diane Lane, Ed Norton, Kevin Sheekey, Jane Rosenthal, Diane Taylor, Patti Harris, Mitchell Moss, Michael Brune, Lisa Belzberg, Tammy Haddad, Jane Hoffman, Liz Robbins, Richard Cohen, Katie Thomson, David Adler

TRANSITIONS -- Brooke Lillard , former deputy director of broadcast media in the Obama White House, is joining the Blue Dog Coalition as communications director. ... Longtime Capitol Hill staffer **Christopher Barkley** has been named as policy director for the Senate Republican Policy Committee. Barkley, currently senior policy adviser to Senator Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), replaces Arjun Mody, now a principal at S-3 Group. ... **Johanna Maska**, former senior Obama White House official and marketing executive, has started as the new CEO of the international consulting firm the Global Situation Room, Inc. <http://politi.co/2q9rDcg>

STATE VISIT -- MSNBC's Morning Joe Senior Producer **Jesse Rodriguez** celebrated his birthday early last night at Del Campo in DC with colleague Michael Larosa and friends Michael Zona, CNN's Richard Hudock and Peter Morris, Greg Martin, Mike Valerio, Robert Edmonson, Mitchell Rivard and Kyle Hill.

OUT AND ABOUT: There was a big send off for Mitch McConnell's outgoing chief of staff, Brian McGuire at Sidecar last night. **SPOTTED** : Burgess Everett, Seung Min Kim, Jim Rowley, Michael Steel, Molly Ball, Glenn Thrush, Jonathan Martin, Donna Cassata, Erica Werner, Jon Ward, Sahil Kapur, Alex Bolton, Paul Kane, Sean Sullivan, Don Stewart, Antonia Ferrier, David Popp, Josh Holmes, John Ashbrook, Rich Edson, Kevin McLaughlin, Alex Conant, Joe Pounder, Jahan Wilcox, Brian Callanan, Joel Gehrke, Kristina Peterson, Shane Goldmacher and Alex Rogers.

-- **Crossroads Strategies** and **JDA Frontline** threw a party Wednesday night for more

than 300 people to showcase their new office space. **SPOTTED:** Becky Tallent, Kristin Smyth, Joanna Acocella, Chet Lott, Elizabeth Baker, Catherine Bohigian, Bobby Thomson, Pace Bradshaw, Ryan Guthrie, Sam Whitfield, Chip Burkhalter, James Dozier, Lee Dunn, Stewart Jeffries, AJ Bhadelia, Jim Papa, Marissa Padilla, Hugh Gamble, Michael Lewan, Tim Clark, former Sen. Trent Lott (Miss.), Brian Yates, Michael Thompson, Lane Penry, Steve Tilton, Matt Sulkala, Mary Pat Lawrence, Richard McDonnell, Todd Dupler, Michael Lewan.

WHCA PARTY GUIDE - THURSDAY : Washingtonian president and CEO Cathy Merrill Williams and Gloria Dittus of Story Partners are hosting the 4th Annual Washington Women in Journalism Awards reception at Dittus' home in Kalorama from 6 to 9 p.m. ... Allen Gannett, Eric Kuhn, John McCarthy and Susanna Quinn are hosting the "Bytes and Bylines" party from 7 to 10 p.m. at DTR Modern Gallery in Georgetown. ... IJR is hosting "The Golden Age of Journalism" party from 8 to 11 p.m. at the Carnegie Library. ...

... **FRIDAY :** Katherine and David Bradley are hosting a VIP "celebratory dinner" starting at 6:15 p.m. at their house in Georgetown. ... Capitol File Magazine, the British Ambassador and Lady Darroch are hosting a party from 6 to 9 p.m. at the British Ambassador's residence. ... Real Clear Politics is hosting a "Toast to the First Amendment" from 7 to 10 p.m. at the National Restaurant Association. ... Mother Nature Network is hosting its third annual White House Correspondents' Jam at The Hamilton from 7-11 p.m., headlined by Billy Bob Thornton and his band, The Boxmasters, and featuring Chuck Leavell of the Rolling Stones, as well as 4 other journalist-led bands. ... The New Media Party, featuring DJ Sylo, is from 8:30 p.m. to midnight at WeWork White House at 1440 G St NW ... United Talent Agency, Jay Sures and Dan Abrams are hosting a party to celebrate "the First Amendment and excellent in journalism" from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Fiola Mare. ...

... **SATURDAY:** Tammy Haddad and her friends are hosting her annual Garden Brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Georgetown at the home of Jefferson Hotel owner Connie Milstein. ... Samantha Bee and her show "Full Frontal" is taping the "Not the White House Correspondents' Dinner" at 3 p.m. (dress code: black tie) at DAR. ... BuzzFeed is hosting a "Red White & Banned" party from 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the Brixton at 901 U St., NW. ... Atlantic Media and CBS News host a pre-dinner reception at the Washington Hilton starting at 6 p.m. ... Thomson Reuters is hosting pre-party (from 6 to 7:30) and after-dinner drinks (until midnight) at the Washington Hilton. ... #DemsInExile is hosting a WHCD after-party at the Exiles Bar on U Street from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. ... MSNBC is hosting its traditional after-party, this time at the Organization of American States. ...

... **SUNDAY:** CNN is hosting a "Political Hangover" brunch from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Longview Gallery. ... Elena and Robert Allbritton and Politico are hosting their annual garden brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at their residence in Georgetown. ... Thomson Reuters is hosting its annual brunch from 11 to 2 p.m. at the Hay Adams Hotel. ... Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) is hosting a women's correspondents brunch and mimosas reception from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at her residence on Capitol Hill.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: WaPo columnist **Dana Milbank**, the pride of Merrick, N.Y. How he's celebrating: "Having friends over to choose wines for my wedding next month to Anna Greenberg." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2ozlJ78>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Toby Tyler of Sen. Lindsey Graham's office (hat tip: Megan McKinley, who was on time)

BIRTHDAYS: Christina Reynolds ... Adam Clymer ... Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) is 48 ... Rep. GK Butterfield (D-N.C.) is 7-0 ... Hannah Kim ... West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice is 66 ... James Prussing ... Lee Whack Jr. is 33 ... Politico California Playbook co-author Carla Marinucci ... Rep. Daniel Webster (R-Fla.) is 68 ... Weesie Vieira, founder of Cadette Public Relations and a BuzzFeed and CBS alum (h/t Katie Rayford) ... Alex De Luca, deputy press secretary for EMILY's List ... Doug Rediker of International Capital Strategies (h/t daughter Caroline) ... Auburn fan Erica Elliott, principal at Jochum Shore & Trossevin PC ... Politico's Aubree Weaver ... Marin Watters, all around good kid and Playbook loyalist, is 11 ... Mark Gardner ... Anna Soellner, comms at Reddit ... Michael Crittenden, SVP at Mercury and a WSJ alum ... Gail Hoffman ... Will Marshall, president and founder of the Progressive Policy Institute ... Charlie Thornton, director of leg affairs for the CFTC and previously was senior professional staff and counsel for House Ag, is 31 (h/t Zack Roday) ... Max Everett, Fortalice Solutions Cyber guru and Bush 43 alum ... Sonia Holman, president of the Mt Vernon Group and the pride of Andover, Massachusetts (h/ts Ed Cash) ...

... **Dan Gerstein**, president of Gotham Ghostwriters (h/t Jon Haber) ... David Hudson, digital strategist at Precision Strategies, who was the associate director of content in the White House Office of Digital Strategy where he helped manage email outreach, the We the People petitions platform, and the White House blog (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Dan Lindner, comms director for Rep. Raul Grijalva ... Lee Brenner of Microsoft ... Seth Mnookin, co-director of MIT's Graduate Program in Science Writing ... Eric Gioia ... Adam Dickter ... Connor Walsh, founder and managing director at Build Digital and a Cantor alum ... Mebus Behrle, USC Schwarzenegger Institute's director of special projects ... Lauren Camera, national education reporter at U.S. News ... Bryan Denton, a star photojournalist based in Beirut and frequent contributor to the NYT ... Alicia "Lisa" Shepard ... Wayne Laugesen, editorial page editor at Colorado Springs Gazette ... Andrew Brenneman ... Jon Fasman, Southeast Asia bureau chief for The Economist ... Chicago's Jamie Citron, an Obama alum ... Joseph Ricca ... Sony Pope Roberts (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Emily Hogin ... Ken Reidy ... Artyom Matusov ... Molly Magarik ... rhythm-and-blues singer Cuba Gooding is 73 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** The corporate responsibility strategy and approach was developed, tested and refined at JPMorgan Chase through efforts on the ground in communities around the world. Learn more about the company's model in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Responsibility Report. <http://politi.co/2pMVfi8> *****

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 10/13/2017 10:22:34 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Chevron: NATS SEASON ENDS in disappointment -- TRUMP scraps OBAMACARE PAYMENTS and will criticize IRAN DEAL -- Concern over THAD COCHRAN'S health -- SPOTTED at the Nationals game -- IRS suspending contract with EQUIFAX

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Chevron

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Driving the Day

Good Friday morning. THE NATIONALS' season is over. D.C.'s inability to win is wrenching. What will make the sting of this loss go away? Time, maybe. Hey, Chicago had to wait a century to win a World Series.

-- **WAPO'S PAUL KANE (@pkcapitol):** "Already seeing Nats-fan BS about 'great season'. No, you can't do that - can't accept that. You have to be tougher, harder on your teams." **CORRECT:** This was a disappointing season.

BY THE WAY -- This looks like the Cubs plane, flying from Dulles to Los Angeles. Cubs play the Dodgers beginning Saturday. **The plane** <http://bit.ly/2xEtBIS>

-- **WAPO's BARRY SVRLUGA'S A1 STORY:** "This Thursday evening started in the mist and ended in a mess, and the educated Washington fan could have told you that when he or she woke up. The Washington Nationals played a game to extend their season. They lost that game. Their season is over. Those with strong stomachs, read further. The rest: See you in spring ...

"On this night, everything we have learned about Washington sports over the past generation was reinforced, with arguments about whether the anguish caused by the Nationals now outdoes that caused by football's Redskins, basketball's Wizards or hockey's Capitals. Discuss among yourselves. We've got all winter."
<http://wapo.st/2xCF9Yc>

NEWS -- "Concerns mount over Thad Cochran's health," by Anna and Burgess Everett: "Republicans are worried about Thad Cochran. The Mississippi senator has been recovering the past several weeks from a urological procedure. And concern is

growing on and off Capitol Hill over whether the 79-year-old lawmaker will return to work on Monday when the Senate comes back from recess - not to mention how long he'll be able to continue leading a high-profile committee or even remain in the Senate. Multiple sources close to the senator said his staff and allies have received limited information from his family about his health status, further fueling questions about his future.

"Cochran's office maintains that the Mississippi Republican will return next week as planned, and Senate Republican aides said they expect him back as well. But several K Street sources and Cochran allies said he's unlikely to be back next week. Multiple sources said there's increasing worry his absence could stretch through the end of the year. Cochran is slated to oversee an Appropriations Committee markup on Thursday. Cochran missed the last two weeks that the Senate was in session. Any further absence would cause major problems for Senate Republicans."

<http://politi.co/2ykwhux>

IMPORTANT CONTEXT -- "As chair of the appropriations panel, Cochran plays a critical role in government funding, particularly as Congress closes in on a mid-December deadline to keep federal agencies open. Cochran remaining out of work would also cause headaches for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) as he looks to pass budget and tax reform legislation, since it takes only three senators who are absent or opposed to legislation to sink a given measure.

"Plus, Cochran's seat is viewed as particularly important, given that the establishment went all out to help him beat former state Sen. Chris McDaniel in the 2014 GOP primary. He is next up for reelection in 2020, and Republicans are desperate for him to stay in office and avoid a special election. McDaniel is already planning a campaign against incumbent Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) in 2018."

BIG STORY -- "Trump will scrap critical Obamacare subsidy," by Josh Dawsey and Paul Demko: "President Donald Trump plans to cut subsidy payments to insurers in his most aggressive move yet to undermine Obamacare after months of unsuccessful repeal efforts on Capitol Hill, according to two sources. The subsidies, which are worth an estimated \$7 billion this year and are paid out in monthly installments, may stop almost immediately since Congress hasn't appropriated funding for the program.

"Scrapping the funding is likely to provide another jolt to the already fragile Obamacare markets. The impact may be cushioned by the fact that many insurers had priced next year's plans higher than they otherwise would have, fearing this decision. Others have already fled the Obamacare markets, which are set to begin open enrollment in Nov. 1 for the 2018 plan year. Insurers rely on the subsidies to reduce out-of-pocket costs for low-income Obamacare customers. They're still on the hook to provide the discounted rates to their members under the law, despite no longer receiving the federal funding.

"Trump has threatened for months to cut off the payments, deriding them as a 'bailout' for insurers. While Republican lawmakers complained the subsidies were never

properly appropriated by Congress, many were wary of ending them suddenly."
<http://politi.co/2wRx2HO>

-- **REALITY: TRUMP** is now putting yet another item on Congress's lap. This is certain to push Republicans to act on Capitol Hill. Why? Because, as the New York Times writes: "insurance markets could quickly unravel." And Republicans control both chambers of Congress and the presidency. The president doesn't think Republicans will own the political issue of health care. His party's lawmakers -- many of whom are up for reelection in 13 months -- disagree.

THE PRESIDENT at 5:36 a.m.: "The Democrats ObamaCare is imploding. Massive subsidy payments to their pet insurance companies has stopped. Dems should call me to fix!"

-- **THE BIG QUESTION:** Will this force Democrats to the negotiating table? Senate Democrats have said Trump has to stop sabotaging Obamacare before they consider talks.

NEXT UP -- "Trump speech to vilify Iran over nuke deal, non-nuke issues," by AP's Matt Lee: "President Donald Trump plans to deliver a broad and harsh critique of Iran in a speech Friday declaring that the landmark Iran nuclear deal is not in America's national security interests, according to U.S. officials and outside advisers to the administration. Trump's speech from the White House will outline specific faults he finds in the 2015 accord but will also focus on an array of Iran's troubling non-nuclear activities, four officials and advisers said. Those include Tehran's ballistic missile program, support for Syrian President Bashar Assad, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and other groups that destabilize the region.

"Under U.S. law, Trump faces a Sunday deadline to notify Congress whether Iran is complying with the accord that was painstakingly negotiated over 18 months by the Obama administration and determine if it remains a national security priority. Although Trump intends to say Iran is living up to the letter of the agreement, he will make the case that the deal is fatally flawed and that its non-nuclear behavior violates the spirit of the regional stability it was intended to encourage, the officials and advisers said.

"The officials and advisers, who insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly preview the speech, said Trump will not call for a re-imposition of nuclear sanctions on Tehran. He will urge lawmakers to codify tough new requirements for Tehran to continue to benefit from the sanctions relief that it won in exchange for curbing its atomic program. And he'll announce his long-anticipated intent to impose sanctions on Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps by designating it a terrorist organization under an existing executive order, according to the officials and advisers."

<http://bit.ly/2xD3s8x>

***** **A message from Chevron:** When an endangered butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery, we protected the habitat and still plant the only thing they eat-

buckwheat. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2y5XNvF> *****

THE LATEST IN CALIFORNIA -- "Death toll from Northern California fires jumps to 31; names of 10 victims released," by L.A. Times' Sonali Kohli, Louis Sahagun, Paige St. John, Nina Agrawal, Chris Megerian and Alene Tchekmedyan: "Fire crews began to make slow progress against wildfires that have killed at least 31 people in Northern California's wine country as officials continued the grim search for more bodies amid the ashes.

"In Santa Rosa, the hardest hit by the fires, officials said they were stunned by the scale of the destruction. An estimated 2,834 homes were destroyed in the city of Santa Rosa alone, along with about 400,000 square feet of commercial space, Santa Rosa Mayor Chris Coursey said in a news conference Thursday afternoon.

"Flames left entire neighborhoods and commercial districts in ruins and even destroyed the city's newest fire station, on Fountaingrove Parkway. Sonoma County Sheriff Robert Giordano told reporters that another person was found dead in his county as search crews and cadaver dogs began sifting through debris for the first time Thursday." <http://politi.co/2z4LxbY>

ON PUERTO RICO -- NYT'S PETER BAKER and CAITLIN DICKERSON: "The message was as stark as it was startling. Three weeks after a killer hurricane ravaged Puerto Rico, President Trump indicated on Thursday that he was losing patience. ... Caught off guard, his advisers scrambled to reassure Puerto Rico that Washington was not abandoning it. The president's warning came on the same day the House approved \$36.5 billion in aid for natural disasters, including in Puerto Rico, with the tab rising weekly. Federal agencies expect to spend years helping the island rebuild." <http://nyti.ms/2ykWxo9>

-- Eileen Lainez (@FEMAspox): ".@FEMA will be w/Puerto Rico, USVI, every state, territory impacted by a disaster every day, supporting throughout their response & recovery".

POLITICO GETS RESULTS -- "IRS temporarily suspends contract with Equifax," by Steven Overly: "The IRS has temporarily suspended the \$7.2 million, no-bid contract it awarded to Equifax to verify the identities of taxpayers when they create accounts on its website, the agency said today. The short-term suspension means that taxpayers will not be able to establish new accounts through a program called Secure Access, which grants them access to online records and transcripts. Those taxpayers who already have accounts will not be affected, the agency said.

"The decision comes after media reports earlier today that the Equifax website may have been compromised a second time. The embattled credit-reporting company disclosed in September that it had been hacked earlier this year and the data of as many as 145.5 million Americans had been breached. ... Lawmakers heavily criticized the agency's decision to award the \$7.2 million contract to Equifax - which POLITICO

first reported - after the data breach. In letters to IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, some members of Congress questioned whether Equifax could be trusted to handle taxpayer data and suggested the contract should be revoked." <http://politi.co/2wRYky0>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Twitter deleted data potentially crucial to Russia probes," by Josh Meyer: "Twitter has deleted tweets and other user data of potentially irreplaceable value to investigators probing Russia's suspected manipulation of the social media platform during the 2016 election, according to current and former government cybersecurity officials. Federal investigators now believe Twitter was one of Russia's most potent weapons in its efforts to promote Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton, the officials say, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"By creating and deploying armies of automated bots, fake users, catchy hashtags and bogus ad campaigns, unidentified operatives launched recurring waves of pro-Trump and anti-Clinton story lines via Twitter that were either false or greatly exaggerated, the officials said. Many U.S. investigators believe that their best hope for identifying who was behind these operations, how they collaborated with each other and their suspected links to the Kremlin lies buried within the mountains of data accumulated in recent years by Twitter." <http://politi.co/2g5S9j1>

-- "Even Pokémon Go used by extensive Russian-linked meddling effort," by CNN's Donie O'Sullivan and Dylan Byers: "One Russian-linked campaign posing as part of the Black Lives Matter movement used Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr and Pokémon Go and even contacted some reporters in an effort to exploit racial tensions and sow discord among Americans, CNN has learned. The campaign, titled 'Don't Shoot Us,' offers new insights into how Russian agents created a broad online ecosystem where divisive political messages were reinforced across multiple platforms, amplifying a campaign that appears to have been run from one source -- the shadowy, Kremlin-linked troll farm known as the Internet Research Agency." <http://cnnmon.ie/2g8csfs>

TRUMP'S CABINET -- "Where's Zinke? The interior secretary's special flag offers clues," by WaPo's Lisa Rein: "At the Interior Department's headquarters in downtown Washington, Secretary Ryan Zinke has revived an arcane military ritual that no one can remember ever happening in the federal government. A security staffer takes the elevator to the seventh floor, climbs the stairs to the roof and hoists a special secretarial flag whenever Zinke enters the building.

"When the secretary goes home for the day or travels, the flag -- a blue banner emblazoned with the agency's bison seal flanked by seven white stars representing the Interior bureaus -- comes down. In Zinke's absence, the ritual is repeated to raise an equally obscure flag for Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt. Responding this week to questions from The Washington Post, a spokeswoman for Zinke, a former Navy SEAL commander, defended the Navy flag-flying tradition as 'a major sign of transparency.'" <http://wapo.st/2xCCwWx>

COMMERCE SECRETARY WILBUR ROSS ON GETTING TAX REFORM PASSED --

"It's the Congress. That's where the flaw comes,' Ross told economist and moderator Larry Kudlow in an exclusive interview on the 'Newsmax in the Nation's Capital' special sponsored by Newsmax and Google. 'You can do whatever you want in the administration. 'Congress is much more about process than about results,' Ross added. 'That will be tragic for the American economy.'" <http://nws.mx/2xCFJW9>

BUT, BUT, BUT -- "GOP lawmakers may be close to compromise on state, local tax deduction," by Aaron Lorenzo: "House Republicans are moving closer to keeping some form of the state and local tax deduction, and President Donald Trump isn't standing in the way, signaling a possible breakthrough in an early spat over tax reform. Several lawmakers who huddled with GOP leaders Thursday indicated that the talks were going well. 'They're trending towards a solution,' said Rep. Tom Reed (R-N.Y.), a member of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee. 'I think there's a good-faith position by all the members involved to try to come up with something that works for everybody.'" <http://politi.co/2z4LxbY>

-- WSJ'S RICH RUBIN and SIOBHAN HUGHES: "The aim, lawmakers say, is to keep the break for middle-income households while repealing it for higher-income households. One idea is to cut off the deduction for households whose incomes exceed a certain level. The challenge will be finding agreement on where that dividing line should be." <http://on.wsj.com/2z5z9Zw>

ABOUT THAT MARCH DEADLINE ... "Trump to extend March 5 deadline to end DACA protections if Congress doesn't act, GOP senator says," by WaPo's Elise Viebeck: "Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) said Trump told him he was willing to 'give it some more time' to allow lawmakers to find a solution for 'dreamers,' unauthorized immigrants brought to this country as children, if Congress does not pass legislation extending protections before time is up. 'The president's comment to me was that, 'We put a six-month deadline out there. Let's work it out. If we can't get it worked out in six months, we'll give it some more time, but we've got to get this worked out legislatively,' Lankford said outside a town hall here Thursday night. Trump did not specify how long an extension might last, Lankford said. 'He wants a legislative solution,' the senator said. 'His focus was, 'We've got to get a legislative solution.'" <http://wapo.st/2zknGWW>

JARED WATCH -- "Background check chief has 'never seen' mistakes and omissions at level of Jared Kushner forms," by CNN's Kara Scannell: "The head of a government bureau responsible for clearing background checks told lawmakers Wednesday he has 'never seen that level of mistakes' when asked about numerous omissions in Jared Kushner's security clearance application. Charles Phalen, the director of the National Background Investigations Bureau, a newly created division within the Office of Personnel Management, made the comment in response to a question during a House subcommittee oversight hearing. Democrats have called on the White House to revoke security clearances granted to Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, and Ivanka Trump over reports of their use of personal email accounts and Kushner's multiple updates to his security clearance

questionnaire, known as SF-86, for failing initially to include meeting with foreign officials." <http://cnn.it/2yj3fJO>

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- Trump will attend the 2017 Values Voter Summit at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. He will deliver remarks on his Iran strategy in the afternoon. He and the first lady will also visit the Secret Service's James J. Rowley training facility.

-- **PENCE** is going to New York for The Seminar Network's Policy and Political Strategy Planning Retreat.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Chicago Cubs catcher Willson Contreras begins to celebrate after Bryce Harper struck out swinging in the ninth inning to end Game 5 of the National League Division Series on Oct 13 at Nationals Park. The Cubs advanced to the NLCS with a 9-8 win. | Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP Photo

TRUMP'S WASHINGTON -- **"Trump's pick for NOAA chief causes a storm,"** by Andrew Restuccia: "As a top executive at AccuWeather, Barry Myers has pushed for limits on the kinds of products that the National Weather Service offers to the public, saying they offered unfair competition to his industry. Now, President Donald Trump's nomination of Myers to lead the weather service's parent agency could allow him to make those kinds of restrictions mandatory - to the benefit of his family-run forecasting company.

"The AccuWeather CEO's nomination to head [NOAA] is stirring criticism from people who worry he would hobble the weather service, which provoked an industry backlash more than a decade ago by making hour-by-hour forecasts, cellphone alerts and other consumer-friendly data widely available online. A bill that Myers supported 12 years ago, sponsored by then-Sen. Rick Santorum, would have prohibited the agency from competing with private providers in most circumstances." <http://politi.co/2yhwQ6p>

MORE MOORE PILE-ON -- **"Charity once led by Roy Moore has listed its headquarters for sale, a move that could bring him \$540,000 windfall,"** by WaPo's Robert O'Harrow Jr. and Shawn Boburg: "A charity once led by U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore has put its historic building in Montgomery, Ala., up for sale, a transaction that could bring Moore \$540,000 because of an unusual compensation arrangement he made while serving as the nonprofit group's president. The 1850s-era building was put on the market in April for nearly \$1.9 million by Moore's wife, Kayla, now president of the charity, said Ed Fleming, the listing agent for the property.

"Fleming said Kayla Moore and her husband were 'thinking of moving and retiring' at the time. ... The circumstances of the listing add to questions swirling around the charity

and more than \$1 million in compensation for Roy Moore while he was working part time from 2007 to 2012. Kayla Moore took over as president in 2013, earning \$65,000 a year." <http://wapo.st/2ylnf0c>

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2y5XNvF> *****

HOLLYWOODLAND -- "Amazon Suspends Entertainment Chief Roy Price," by Variety's Daniel Holloway: "The Amazon Studios president's departure on an unpaid leave comes amid renewed sexual harassment allegations and multiple signs that Amazon and others in the industry had withdrawn their support from the embattled executive. Insiders have speculated for months about Price's possible departure from his role as head of Amazon's original-video arm." <http://bit.ly/2zkrmmr> ... **Hollywood Reporter on the allegations against Roy Price** <http://bit.ly/2z56J1H>

-- **"Harvey Weinstein Scandal Spurs Lawmakers To Go After Non-Disclosure Agreements,"** by BuzzFeed's Claudia Koerner: "A pair of New York lawmakers are aiming to end the sort of confidentiality agreements that shield workplace sexual harassment and that have been cited in the ongoing Harvey Weinstein scandal. The new language to an existing bill, to be introduced on Friday, would void any contract provision where an employer can force an employee to keep quiet about sexual harassment and discrimination claims. It would include claims that are settled in arbitration, where non-disclosure agreements routinely keep the details of allegations secret." <http://bzfd.it/2yIIUX0>

Playbookers

SPOTTED at the Nationals game last night: Speaker Paul Ryan, behind home plate, Rep. Dave Brat (R-Va.) on the suite level, Ben Bernanke, Al Hunt, George Will, Jonathan Karl, House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), Alex and Caitlin Conant, Matt Terrill, Will May, Tom and Todd Ricketts, Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), Fred Upton (R-Mich.), and Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Bob Costa, David Drucker, Corry Bliss, Kellyanne Conway, Jahan Wilcox, Joe Pounder, Emma Nelson, Matt Gorman, Garrett Haake, Courtney Johnson.

-- **SPOTTED:** Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) in the San Francisco airport last night. Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) on a delayed flight from San Francisco to Dulles.

OUT AND ABOUT IN L.A. -- MICHAEL KIVES , Darnell Strom and Jordan Brown hosted a fundraiser for the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee at Kives' house in LA Thursday night. Speakers included DLCC Executive Director Jessica Post,

Oregon House Speaker and DLCC Chair Tina Kotek, Washington State Senate Democratic Leader Sharon Nelson and California State Rep. Laura Friedman.
SPOTTED: Alice Eve, Disney's Tendo Nagenda, MasterClass's Matthew Rutler and screenwriter Liz Hannah.

TRANSITIONS -- JENNIFER SENIOR will leave her job as book critic at the New York Times in December. She's going to go back to long-form journalism at the NYT.
<http://bit.ly/2yeq0kz>

SUNDAY SO FAR - "Fox News Sunday," guest-hosted by James Rosen: Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.). Panel: Karl Rove, Marie Harf, Mike Needham, Gerald Seib.

--**ABC's "This Week":** Panel: Mary Bruce, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Van Jones, Matt Schlapp, and Charlie Sykes.

--**CBS' "Face the Nation":** latest CBS News Nation Tracker Poll with CBS News elections and surveys director Anthony Salvanto ... retired U.S. Navy captain Scott Kelly. Political panel: Molly Ball, Jonah Goldberg, and David Ignatius.

--**CNN's "State of the Union":** Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine). Panel: David Urban, Neera Tanden, Carlos Gutierrez, Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.)

--**CNN's "Inside Politics,"** hosted by John King: Michael Bender, Abby Phillip, Eliana Johnson, Manu Raju

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Mike Barnicle , senior contributor on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." How he got his start in journalism: "My first 'job' in the now distant newspaper business was gathering quotes at Fitchburg, Mass. city council meetings for the North Worcester County bureau chief of the Worcester Telegram, the late Dave Gilmartin. I was 16 years old and could not believe people got paid to watch and listen to other people and perhaps even cover sports, ballgames and the like." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2yIrSqS>

BIRTHDAYS: Ari Fleischer is 57 ... Billy Bush is 45 ... Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) is 59 ... GPG's Nedra Pickler ... Michael Tomasky is 57 ... Gerrit Lansing, senior partner at IMGE and co-founder of Revv (hat tip: Blake Waggoner) ... Bill Schuette, Michigan's Attorney General who's now running for governor, celebrating by dedicating a STEM elementary school in his hometown of Midland, Mich. (h/t son Bill) ... Cathy Rubin ... Josh Etter is 36 ... WashPost research editor Alice Crites ... Christopher Colford ... Emily Cadei, correspondent for the SacBee in McClatchy's DC bureau (h/t Kristin Roberts) ... The Breeding Twins: Nic (Burson-Marsteller) and Nate (Secretary DeVos), both Bush 43 alums, celebrating with friends at the Brig ... David Willkie, Lugar alum, and favorite son of Indiana (h/ts Erica Suares) ... Nate Brand, new comms director for Todd Rokita's campaign (h/t Ada) ... Shawn Yancy, Fox 5 DC news anchor (h/t Niall Stanage) ... Jerry Parshall, a manager of state and local government affairs at CAP, who celebrated last night by catching his Foo Fighters play the Anthem's very first show (h/t Morgan

Finkelstein) ... Clarence Wardell ... Dawn Le ... Corinne Falotico ... Regina Hing ... WSJ's Yigu Lin ... Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.) is 57 ...

... **Rick Davis**, CNN EVP of standards and practices, former EP of "Crossfire" and former VP of Washington programming, is 65 - "Yes, he has been at CNN for 37 years. One of the first employees at CNN" (h/t Sam Feist) ... Gregg Rothschild is 52 ... Jack Krumholtz ... Bev Lindsey (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Judy Pino ... Politico's Lily Muntzing and Candice Norwood ... Carrie Adams ... AP alum Steven Gutkin is 53 ... Lily Schuurman ... Ashley Prime Gula ... Paul Williams ... Jeffrey Kimbell ... Lucy Weber ... Chris Jankowski ... Fran Person is 35 ... Kris Anderson ... Christen Linke Young ... Josh Friedmann ... Daryl Muller ... NYT's Craig Smith ... Andrew Hosea ... Joanna Burgos ... Michael Lemonick ... Azam Baig ... Sarah Stevens ... Matt Walsh is 53 (h/t Tammy Haddad) ... Carl Wiederaenders ... Erin O'Neill (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat-buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video:
<http://politi.co/2y5XNvF> *****

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To: Joe Pounder[jpounder@definerscorp.com]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 10:03:07 PM
Subject: RE: Media Clip Service

Mr. Pounder,

Yes, 11:30 am would work. I'll look forward to talking with you.

George

From: Joe Pounder [mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 5:58 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Media Clip Service

Mr. Hull,

Sorry about that. My schedule was pretty jammed. Are you available at either 10:30am or 11:30am tomorrow? Happy to connect and can just give your number below a buzz. Thanks and let me know what works best.

Joe

On Wed, Jun 21, 2017 at 4:23 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Mr. Pounder,

I'm following up on a phone message I left you several days ago. As I said in that message, I believe you have corresponded with my colleague, Jahan Wilcox. I'm reaching out to ask to speak with you about services you can offer in capturing media content for us. Please let

me know when we can talk. My contact information is below.

George Hull

Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator

Office of Public Affairs

U.S. EPA

Tel. 202-564-0790

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 3/15/2018 10:19:08 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Business Roundtable: Bill Gates D.C. schedule today: Playbook Interview then meeting with President Trump

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Business Roundtable

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. WE ARE SITTING down this morning with **BILL GATES** just hours before he meets with **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** in the Oval Office. The billionaire philanthropist has been making the rounds in D.C. with lawmakers and agency officials in his quest to push for continued U.S. leadership in global health and development and the 2018 priorities of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We're going to talk specifics about who he met with and how he's approaching Trump, among other hot topics.

-- **WE'VE HAD OVERWHELMING INTEREST** in this event. Unfortunately space for this Playbook Interview has filled up, but we'll be livestreaming it starting at 8:15 a.m.
<http://politi.co/2GngYDj>

SPOTTED: HHS SECRETARY ALEX AZAR tweeted a photo with Gates yesterday afternoon. <http://bit.ly/2pjFz3Z> **REP. STEPHANIE MURPHY (D-FLA.)** also tweeted a photo with Gates. <http://bit.ly/2HCUBJv> She and Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) and Reps. Adam Smith (D-Wash.) and Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) had burgers and fries upstairs at Shake Shack in Union Station yesterday.

THE HOUSE is going into recess this afternoon. **THE SENATE** is not expected to vote until Monday. What a town!

ANNIE KARNI: "Extreme secrecy surrounds Comey book manuscript": "James Comey's book is getting the Harry Potter treatment. 'A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies and Leadership,' the upcoming memoir from former FBI director James Comey, is set for publication on April 18 - and with anticipation rivaling that of the cult children's favorite, the publisher is taking extreme precautions to prevent potentially explosive revelations detailing Comey's interactions with President Donald Trump from leaking.

"Instead of circulating multiple print drafts among the editors and agents working on the book, the publisher, Flatiron Books, has implemented a password-protected electronic system so that only those involved in the project have access to it.

"The project is stored under a code name so that staffers who are not involved in the project wouldn't know where to find it if they tried. At warehouses that will ship out copies of the book, workers are being asked to sign nondisclosure agreements, according to people familiar with the procedures.

"And while books typically ship out from warehouses about two weeks before their official publication dates - sometimes landing on bookstore shelves days early - the shipping date for Comey's book is expected to be moved closer to the publication date to keep a tighter lid on the physical copies." <http://politi.co/2pcYgH5>

NOT THE GOP TAKEAWAY FROM PA-18 -- ELAINA PLOTT in The Atlantic,
"Trump Says a Democrat Won in Pennsylvania Because He's 'Like Trump'": "If Donald Trump is worried about Democrats using an upset victory in Pennsylvania as a blueprint for winning big in the midterms, he didn't let on. Trump broke his silence on the election at a private fundraiser for Missouri Senate candidate Josh Hawley Wednesday night, telling a crowd of donors that Lamb had run 'a pretty smart race, actually,' according to an audio recording of the remarks obtained by The Atlantic.

"Democrat Conor Lamb defeated Republican Rick Saccone in a district Trump won by nearly 20 points in 2016. 'The young man last night that ran, he said, 'Oh, I'm like Trump. Second Amendment, everything. I love the tax cuts, everything.' He ran on that basis,' Trump said, according to audio of the event shared with The Atlantic. 'He ran on a campaign that said very nice things about me. I said, 'Is he a Republican? He sounds like a Republican to me.'" <http://theatlantic.com/2Hxwgc>

-- Former NRCC E.D. Liesl Hickey -- @lieslhipkey: "GOP candidates: If you aren't running like you are 10 points down - start now. If you've never had a real campaign - get one quick. Outside groups aren't your campaign. No excuse for not being prepared."

NOT SURPRISING -- "More Democrats likely to disavow Pelosi after Pennsylvania stunner," by Elena Schneider in Pittsburgh and Heather Caygle in Washington: "Conor Lamb weathered \$10 million in attack ads cartoonishly calling the Democratic candidate in Pennsylvania's special election a member of Nancy Pelosi's liberal 'flock.' Now other Democratic hopefuls are looking to adopt Lamb's strategy - he repeatedly and bluntly disavowed the Democratic leader - in their own competitive races. It raises the prospect of a slate of Democratic hopefuls running against the party's House leader as they try to neutralize one of the GOP's go-to attacks - a pillar of Republicans' plan to keep the House majority in November.

"A half-dozen Democratic House members and candidates told POLITICO in interviews that they had been closely monitoring how Lamb handled the Pelosi attack. In

one notable ad, the 33-year-old Marine faced the camera and called a claim that he's a clone of the Democratic leader 'a big lie. I've already said on the front page of the newspaper that I don't support Nancy Pelosi.'" <http://politi.co/2FJI1HY>

-- REALITY: NANCY PELOSI has thick skin. She would love nothing more than for Democrats to win back the House majority. If people dump on her en route to the majority, fine.

YOUR NEW NEC DIRECTOR -- @grynbaum: "TV star Larry Kudlow is currently on TV describing how the president saw a photo of him on TV and called him handsome. 'So Trumpian!' Kudlow says. ... Kudlow is getting choked up about leaving behind CNBC. The hardest part about going to the White House, he says, 'is I won't be here 3 or 4 days a week anymore.' ... Kudlow says -- jokingly? - that he'll do whatever Jamie Dimon wants as long as Jamie buys him dinner at 'our local watering hole on the Upper East Side'".

SHULKIN SAFE, FOR NOW -- "Trump administration dials back Shulkin firing rumors - for now," by Lorraine Woellert and Arthur Allen: "With the policy and political stakes high, administration officials and others on Wednesday were tamping down rumors of Shulkin's imminent dismissal. 'There are no personnel changes to announce at the Department of Veterans Affairs,' agency spokesman Curt Cashour said in a written statement. 'President Trump has made clear that he expects the department's sole focus to be on providing quality care to America's veterans who have sacrificed to keep this country free and safe.'" <http://politi.co/2FWTtmG>

***** **A message from Business Roundtable: Smart regulation benefits America's workers.** Regulations are essential to protecting our environment and the safety of American workers - but our nation needs a smart, balanced approach that does not impose unnecessary burdens on job creation, economic growth, and American competitiveness. Learn more [here](#). *****

MORE TAX CUTS! -- "Trump and Brady say more tax cuts coming," by Brian Faler: "President Donald Trump and the House's top tax writer said separately Wednesday that Republicans are working on a second round of tax cuts. House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) declined to discuss many details of what Republicans have in a mind, but said a proposal would be unveiled sometime this year.

"We think even more can be done," he said in an interview with Fox Business News. 'We want to make sure we're encouraging innovation in America, we want to help families save for the long term.' Later in the day, Trump said there would be a 'phase two' for tax cuts, though he didn't provide any details either. 'It's going to be something very special. Kevin Brady's working on it with me,' Trump said at a roundtable discussion in St. Louis with business executives, workers and educators.

"Brady suggested the plan would call for extending the slate of tax cuts for individuals now due to expire at the end of 2025." <http://politi.co/2HAWfv0>

-- **LET'S BE REAL:** This has very little chance of happening. Republicans are fighting for their political lives -- and majorities in the House and Senate. It took the fear of not having anything to run on in the wake of their health care overhaul disaster that helped align the stars for a once in a generation tax bill. Most insiders believe the omni, the last must-pass legislation this year, is one of the last things Congress will do before November.

THE LATEST IN THE MUELLER PROBE ...

DARREN SAMUELSON -- "Trump lawyers prepping for potential Mueller interview": "President Donald Trump's lawyers are gaming out possible questions and answers for a potential interview with special counsel Robert Mueller, according to two people familiar with the strategy.

"The preparations reflect an understanding that negotiations with the lead Russia investigator, which have been ongoing since January, will eventually culminate in a sit-down meeting between Mueller with the president. One source said the discussions about the terms of a possible interview may soon even reach a conclusion.

"I don't think it's months and months out. I don't think it's in a week,' said the person familiar with the negotiations. 'But I think it's moving toward closure.'"

<http://politi.co/2FCEZcn>

NICE TRY -- "Manafort seeks dismissal of D.C. Mueller indictment," by Josh Gerstein: "The indictment that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort faces on charges of money laundering and failing to register as a foreign agent is fatally flawed because of defects in the appointment of Special Counsel Robert Mueller, Manafort's attorneys argued in a new court filing Wednesday night.

"In a motion seeking dismissal of all five charges pending against Manafort in federal court in Washington, lawyers for the former Trump aide and veteran lobbyist contend that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein gave Mueller too much authority when he was appointed last May. Manafort's attorneys note that the alleged unregistered lobbying took place years before the Trump campaign and has no connection to the core issue Mueller was named to look into: alleged collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia." <http://politi.co/2GvaHFI>

AS THE WORLD TURNS AT FOGGY BOTTOM -- "A Tillerson Confidant Survives the Purge With Help From Friends," by Bloomberg's Nick Wadhams: "Within hours after President Donald Trump fired Rex Tillerson as secretary of state, the White House set about purging his inner circle. Brian Hook may prove the exception.

"Hook, the State Department's director of policy planning, is among the last Tillerson confidants standing after the president's dismissal-by-tweet of his top diplomat on Tuesday. Far from being ousted, Hook is heading to a meeting in Vienna on Friday

to push Trump's demands for revamping Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

"The key to Hook's survival may be his long-standing reputation in Republican foreign policy circles, bolstered by the access he gained as Tillerson's liaison with the White House. Even as Tillerson was viewed there with distrust and mounting exasperation, Hook developed relations with top Trump advisers including Stephen Miller and Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law. Kushner invited Hook along on some of his overseas trips." <https://bloom.bg/2pdEKti>

DELAY! ... NYT's Mark Landler: "Few officials expect Mr. Pompeo's arrival at the State Department to derail the [North Korea] meeting itself, as long as the president and Mr. Kim remain committed to it. But Mr. Tillerson's departure deprives the White House of the person most experienced in efforts to reach out to North Korea. As the C.I.A. director, Mr. Pompeo has focused more on the threats posed by Pyongyang.

"Mr. Pompeo will not be able to establish contact with the South Korean foreign minister, let alone his North Korean counterpart, until the Senate approves his nomination - a process that officials on Capitol Hill said could take several weeks. The White House has not yet even completed the paperwork to begin that process, the officials said." <http://nyti.ms/2lrM517>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- The president will meet and hold a bilateral meeting with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar. Trump will head to the Capitol to attend the Friends of Ireland luncheon. In the afternoon, he is meeting with oil and gas lobbying group the American Petroleum Institute. He has an Oval Office meeting slated with Bill Gates. In the evening, Trump will participate in the "Shamrock Bowl" presentation presented by Varadkar.

MARCH MADNESS #PLAYBOOKPOOL -- BEAT THE BUZZER! You have until 11:30 a.m. ET today to fill out your bracket for the 2nd Annual Playbook Pool and compete against your friends, top Playbookers, political insiders and VIPs to win prizes including Apple Watches, AirPods, Go Pros, Google Home-not to mention some pretty legit bragging rights. Among the participants this year: White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, FOX's Bret Baier, CNN's Jake Tapper, Kaitlan Collins, Chris Cillizza, Joe Johns, Brianna Keilar and Phil Mattingly, ABC's Jonathan Karl, and HLN's SE Cupp have sent in their picks.

IN THE SENATE, Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), James Lankford (R-Okla.), David Perdue (R-Ga.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) are in it to win it. **AND IN THE HOUSE,** Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Democratic Caucus Chairman Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) lead a host of members who've submitted their brackets. **IN THE STATES,** governors are going all in as well, including Larry Hogan (R-Md.), Roy Cooper (D-N.C.), Steve Bullock (D-Mont.), Chris Sununu (R-N.H.), Phil Murphy (D-N.J.), Kate Brown (D-Ore.), Jay Inslee (D-Wash.), Pete Ricketts (R-Neb.) and BOTH Walkers, Scott and Bill (Wisconsin and Alaska). You can check out our VIP Board and get your bracket in now. **CLICK HERE** <http://bit.ly/2ATI8gD>

-- **JOIN US** tonight for an informal watch party at **WILLIE'S** (our official Playbook Pool partner) in Navy Yard during the evening games for #PlaybookPool discounts and specials. **Willie's website** <http://bit.ly/2HBLtVE>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Students hold up signs during a rally for gun control outside of the U.S. Capitol on March 14. One month after the Parkland shooting in Florida, high school students and activists across the country participated in walkouts and protests to call on Congress to act on gun control legislation. | Jose Luis Magana/AP Photo

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER STORMY DANIELS STORY -- "Trump Organization Tied to Deal to Keep Ex-Porn Star Quiet," by WSJ's Michael Rothfeld and Joe Palazzolo: "Documents marked 'HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL PROCEEDING' for the first time tie President Donald Trump's flagship holding company to the continuing effort to silence a former adult-film actress who says she had an affair with Mr. Trump. A Trump Organization lawyer, Jill A. Martin, is listed as counsel in an arbitration demand for Essential Consultants LLC, a Delaware company formed by Mr. Trump's personal lawyer and used to pay \$130,000 to Stephanie Clifford in exchange for her silence, according to Feb. 22 arbitration documents filed in Orange County, Calif." <http://on.wsj.com/2HzA4W6>

-- **"BuzzFeed maneuver could free Stormy Daniels to speak on Trump,"** by Josh Gerstein: "BuzzFeed may have found a legal opening to allow the porn actress Stormy Daniels to discuss her alleged relationship with President Donald Trump and a \$130,000 payment she received just before the 2016 election as part of a nondisclosure agreement she is now trying to void.

"The same Trump attorney who brokered the deal with Daniels, Michael Cohen, filed a libel suit in January against BuzzFeed and four of its staffers over publication of the so-called dossier compiling accurate, inaccurate and unproven allegations about Trump's relationship with Russia. Now, BuzzFeed is using Cohen's libel suit as a vehicle to demand that Daniels preserve all records relating to her relationship with Trump, as well as her dealings with Cohen and the payment he has acknowledged arranging in 2016." <http://politi.co/2GtUDUC>

UNDERSTANDING THE DACA BOTTLENECK -- "'The place bills go to die'," by Rachael Bade and John Bresnahan: "In late February, Speaker Paul Ryan and his leadership team went to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte with a request. With a White House deadline fast approaching to address the fate of Dreamers facing possible deportation, the leaders wanted to put Goodlatte's conservative

immigration plan on the House floor, but needed him to make changes to win more votes. Goodlatte, an immigration hard-liner, assured Ryan he would be flexible.

"But weeks later, Goodlatte's legislation is still languishing. No substantive changes have been made to the measure, according to multiple senior House GOP sources. And House Republicans have done nothing to deliver on President Donald Trump's promise to do right by young immigrants brought to the United States as children." <http://politi.co/2DqzkQB>

-- THE LARGER TAKEAWAY: "Goodlatte has long posed an imposing hurdle even for House Republican leaders who should, in theory, be able to pull rank on him. They've spent more than five years trying to cajole the 65-year-old Virginia Republican to take up consequential legislation. Instead, Goodlatte has moved slowly or not at all, his GOP colleagues say, often stalling until lawmakers move on.

"At times, his tactics have created tension and ill will with leadership and Republican members of his own committee. In the process, they say, Goodlatte has squandered the power of the Judiciary Committee, which has among the most expansive jurisdictions of any committee in Congress."

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. Kept Silent About Its Role in Another Firefight in Niger," by NYT's Charlie Savage, Eric Schmitt and Thomas Gibbons-Neff: "Green Berets working with government forces in Niger killed 11 Islamic State militants in a firefight in December, the American military acknowledged for the first time on Wednesday.

"The battle occurred two months after four United States soldiers died in an ambush in another part of Niger - and after senior commanders had imposed stricter limits on military missions in the West African country. No American or Nigerien forces were harmed in the December gun battle. But the combat - along with at least 10 other previously unreported attacks on American troops in West Africa between 2015 and 2017 - indicates that the deadly Oct. 4 ambush was not an isolated episode in a nation where the United States is building a major drone base." <http://nyti.ms/2tNZTQt>

***** **A message from Business Roundtable: Regulatory relief is essential for American innovation and competitiveness.** Federal regulations have imposed an ever-increasing burden on America's businesses and workers - forcing Americans to spend billions of hours every year on paperwork and compliance. That's time and energy our businesses and workers could instead devote to turning new ideas into new innovations that create jobs and increase U.S. competitiveness. Regulatory relief has lessened the burden of federal red tape significantly, but there is still a long way to go. Continuing this effort is essential to further increase job creation, innovation, and economic growth. Learn more [here](#). *****

ARTHUR BROOKS leaving AEI - **"Reflections on a Decade of Leading a Think Tank"** in WSJ: "I am in my 10th year as president of the American Enterprise Institute.

This week I asked AEI's board of trustees to begin, over the coming year, a search for my successor. ... After a decade promoting this mission, what worries me most today-not for AEI, but for America-is that the competition of ideas is under attack. Many would rather shut down debate than participate in it.

"Politicians from both parties try to discredit their opponents with name-calling and ad hominem attacks. On too many college campuses, people with the 'wrong' viewpoints and ideas are unwelcome. Much of the mass media has become polarized, meaning readers and viewers on the right and left are never challenged in their conviction that the other side is made up of knaves and fools." <http://on.wsj.com/2InDtbL>

WASHINGTON INC. -- "Oil group to lobby president after stay at Trump hotel," by Ben Lefebvre: "The oil industry's top lobby group is holding a two-day board meeting at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., before its executive committee goes to the White House to voice concerns about President Donald Trump's proposed steel tariffs, sources familiar with the meetings told POLITICO.

"The American Petroleum Institute's annual board meeting that started Wednesday could involve up to 200 people representing various oil and gas companies - including the top executives of major oil companies - paying to stay at Trump's hotel. It's not known how much API is paying to the hotel, which is controlled by the Trump Organization, the family-owned business headed by the president's son Donald Jr." <http://politi.co/2Hzm2nj>

ANOTHER TRUMP BOOK -- "Scaramucci is writing a book about Trump," by N.Y. Post's Carleton English: "Anthony Scaramucci - the former White House communications director who infamously lasted only 10 days in the White House - has just signed a deal with Hachette for book due out in September, The Post has learned. But don't expect a 'Fire and Fury'-like gossip-filled page-turner, The Mooch warns.

"The Wall Street veteran says he remains loyal to President Trump. 'It's an entrepreneur writing about an entrepreneur who has now ascended into the presidency,' Scaramucci, who founded asset manager SkyBridge Capital, told The Post in an interview at Midtown's Core Club. To be titled 'The Blue Collar President: How Trump is Reinventing the Aspirational Working Class,' the book will focus on the president's management style - which, of course, has included a high-level of turnover in its 13 months." <http://nyp.st/2tQxg52>

Playbookers

ABOUT LAST NIGHT FROM CALIFORNIA ... -- SPOTTED: Marty Nolan, Buffy Wicks, candidate for state assembly 15 in California, Amelia Matier, Kip Wainscott, Ben LeBolt and Andrew Snow at the Golden Squirrel after a journalism school event at Berkeley. In the photo: Lynn Sweet, Jake, Luke Russert, Paul Kane, Maureen Orth and Carl Hulse.

Pic <http://bit.ly/2FFO4Ry>

SPOTTED at the George Town Club last night for a toast to Alex Gage, GOP polling and micro-targeting guru and founder of TargetPoint Consulting and Deep Root Analytics: Michael Meyers, Brent Seaborn and Alicia Downs, Sara Fagen, Alex Lundry, Brent McGoldrick, Robin Roberts, Will Feltus, Ben Ginsberg, Matt Rhoades, Ed Goeas, Charlie Spies, Michael Toner, Larry McCarthy, Brian Baker, Ron Kaufman, Mike Dubke, with cameos by video from Karl Rove and Mitt Romney.

SPOTTED: Jeff Sessions with his family seeing the musical "The Wiz" last night at Ford's Theater; Ben Carson was also at the play ... Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) last night at Cafe Milano.

TRANSITIONS -- Lauren Aronson is now managing director at FP1 Strategies' public affairs and communications division. She previously was press secretary for the House Committee on Ways and Means. ... **Isaiah Nelson** is joining McKenna Media; he most recently helped set up James Smith's campaign for governor in South Carolina.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Kristen Jarvis West ... Rory Brosius, former deputy director of Joining Forces and current adviser for military families at the Biden Foundation (hat tips: Melanie Fonder Kaye)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Brendan Buck, counselor to Speaker Paul Ryan, is 36. He's celebrating at dinner at Del Mar with his girlfriend, Rebecca. **A fun fact about Brendan:** "When my dad was in his twenties, he worked for then-Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.). My dad started as the personal aide, and then handled some policy issues. And my mom's dad worked as a military adviser for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. All decades before I got into this stuff, but you could say it's in my blood." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2FSj8wW>

BIRTHDAYS: Lenny Alcivar, Stefanik strategist and comms entrepreneur who recently launched communications firm the Alcivar Group, is 46 (h/t Phil Musser) ... Reid alum George Holman ... Josh Deckard ... NYT's Sopan Deb is 3-0 ... Washingtonian writer-at-large Jack Limpert ... Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 85 ... former Sen. Ted Kaufman (D-Del.) is 79 ... Rachel Schindler, who works in media partnerships at Facebook and is a Politico alum, and her twin brother Max Schindler are 26 ... Politico's Kevin Barnard and Apryle Babish ... birthday brothers Alex Baker, Obama Commerce alum now at Accenture, and Matt Baker, manager of corporate comms at Inspire Brands and an Edelman alum ... Mark J. Green, former NYC public advocate, is 73 ... Sir Philip Green is 66 ... David Silverman is 61 ... Kevin Youkilis is 39 ... Hector Manuel Ramirez ... Suzanne Smalley, senior director of content and strategy at AtlanticLIVE ... Amanda Broun ... Michael Allen ...

... **Brittini Palke**, press secretary for the Senate Homeland Security and Gov't Affairs Committee ... Marcus Weisgerber, global business editor at Defense One ... Jack Polidori ... Megan Uhrich, business strategy at Ad Hoc Team ... former West Virginia

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin is 66 ... Franklin Davis, senior director of federal affairs at American Beverage Association ... Jenny 8. Lee, co-founder of literary studio Plympton and NYT alum ... Edelman's Kevin Infante is 29 ... Kate Dickens of S-3 Public Affairs (h/t Matt Bravo) ... John Cochran, NBC and ABC alum ... Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.) is 6-0 ... Rob Stien, VP of gov't relations and regulatory affairs at InterDigital ... Chad Scarborough ... Austin Durrer, COS for Rep. Charlie Crist (D-Fla.) ... Craig Sondag, who works in gov't relations at Allianz Life ... Chrissy Shott Kopple ... John Northington ... Rahimeh Andalibian ... Campbell Dickson ... Kimberly Hill ... Nicole Vartanian ... Chloe LaBranche ... will.i.am is 43 (h/t AP)

***** **A message from Business Roundtable: A 21st century American economy demands a 21st century regulatory system.** As America's economy continues to improve as a result of tax reform, it's essential that we also take action to bring federal regulations into the 21st century. Outdated permitting processes, along with antiquated rules and regulations, slow down growth, delay new investments in our economy, and diminish America's competitiveness. Efforts to bring America's regulatory system into the 21st century are already making a difference. Continuing to modernize regulations will benefit America's workers and our economy. Learn more [here](#). *****

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sun 5/6/2018 2:21:50 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Goldman Sachs: Giuliani says Trump might not comply with a subpoena, and says Cohen might've paid off more women

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Goldman Sachs

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

TRUMP'S WEEK: Tuesday: President Donald Trump is lunching with VP Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He'll give remarks at a Federal Judges Association reception. **Wednesday:** The president hosts a Cabinet meeting. He will also participate in a celebration of military mothers. **Friday:** Trump is hosting a roundtable with CEOs of auto companies.

SHOT ... JAKE TAPPER on **CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION":** "Do you know of any other payments like this one?" **KELLYANNE CONWAY:** "I do not. They did not cross my desk as campaign manager." (via [@briansteller](https://twitter.com/briansteller))

CHASER ... ABC'S GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS speaks to **RUDY GIULIANI** about payments Michael Cohen might have made to other women: "I have no knowledge of that but I would think, if it was necessary, yes. He made payments for the president, or he conducted business for the president, which means he had legal fees, monies laid out and expenditures, which I have on my bills to my clients."

-- ALSO, GIULIANI ON COMPLYING WITH A SUBPOENA: "Well, we don't have to. He's the president of the United States. We can assert the same privilege other presidents have. President Clinton negotiated a deal in which he didn't admit the effectiveness of the subpoena." **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "But he did testify before the grand jury. Is the president willing to do that?" **GIULIANI:** "But only for two-and-a-half hours. Only with an arranged format. Would we be willing to do that? I'd rather have the Hillary Clinton treatment."

... GIULIANI: "[E]very lawyer in America says he'd be a fool to testify. I've got a client who wants to testify ... he said it yesterday. And Jay and I said to ourselves, my goodness, I hope we get a chance to tell him the risk that he's taking. So he may testify. We may actually work things out with Bob Mueller because working with him directly is

good."

-- FOR GOOD MEASURE...: STEPHANOPOULOS: "Is it OK to lie to the press?"

GIULIANI: "Uh, gee, I don't know, you know a few presidents who did that. I don't think this president has done that."

CHRIS WALLACE interviewed **JOE DIGENOVA** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY":**

DIGENOVA: "The President will not sit down for an interview because this investigation has now reached a level of bad faith, this is no longer a good faith investigation."

CHUCK TODD spoke with Stormy Daniels' attorney **MICHAEL AVENATTI** on **NBC'S "MEET THE PRESS":** **TODD:** "What are you fighting for at this point?" **AVENATTI:**

"Well, she hasn't told the entire story. ... This should matter to the American people because they have the right to be told the truth by their elected officials. They have the right not to be lied to including onboard Air Force One and coverups should always matter to the American people."

OK THEN ... Good Sunday morning. **SPOTTED:** Jared and Ivanka having dinner last night upstairs at The Line hotel in Adams Morgan. She wore a red flowered dress. "She had red wine ... He came and left with a baseball cap. He took it off for dinner," said our tipster.

STORY OF THE WEEK ... NYT'S JONATHAN MARTIN in **PHOENIX** on **SUNDAY A1:**

"At His Ranch, John McCain Shares Memories and Regrets With Friends": "When former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. traveled to Senator John McCain's Arizona ranch last Sunday to spend a few hours with his ailing friend, the two reminisced about the 'crazy senators' they had served with, the overseas trips they took together for decades and the friendship Mr. McCain forged with Mr. Biden's two sons.

"But the conversation on the sun-splashed deck off Mr. McCain's bedroom was not all nostalgia. 'Here John knows he's in a very, very, very precarious situation, and yet he's still concerned about the state of the country,' Mr. Biden said in an interview. 'We talked about how our international reputation is being damaged and we talked about the need for people to stand up and speak out.'

"As he battles brain cancer and the debilitating side effects of his aggressive treatment, Mr. McCain himself is reckoning with his history and the future, as he and a stream of friends share memories and say what needs to be said. ...

"The Republican senator encouraged the former Democratic vice president to 'not walk away' from politics, as Mr. Biden put it before refusing to discuss a possible 2020 presidential run. Mr. McCain is using a new book and documentary to reveal his regret about not selecting former Senator Joseph I. Lieberman as his running mate in 2008.

"His intimates have informed the White House that their current plan for his funeral is for Vice President Mike Pence to attend the service to be held in Washington's National

Cathedral but not President Trump, with whom Mr. McCain has had a rocky relationship." <https://nyti.ms/2rm5F86> ... **NYT A1** <http://bit.ly/2jz0sW0>

INTERESTING STORY ... L.A. TIMES: "Republicans at state party gathering would rather talk about the gas tax than keeping the House" <https://lat.ms/2KANKT3>

THE INVESTIGATIONS ...

-- **"Mueller Probe Might Have to Go Dark for Midterm Election:** Though there is no legal deadline, Justice Department guidelines say prosecutors should avoid the appearance of trying to sway elections," by WSJ's Aruna Viswanatha and Erica Orden: "The clock is ticking for special counsel Robert Mueller. With six months to go until November's midterm elections, Mr. Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign will soon run into a dead zone of sorts, in which former prosecutors say they expect him either to wrap up, or lie low and take no visible steps until after the election.

"Though Mr. Mueller doesn't face any specific legal deadline, the fall midterms amount to a political one, according to experts and prosecutors. He will reach a point this summer when Justice Department habits dictate that he will have to either finish his inquiries or go dark and stretch out his work until past November so he doesn't appear to be trying to sway voters' decisions, which would be at odds with Justice Department guidelines for prosecutors." <https://on.wsj.com/2jvXwK2>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Small businesses are America's job creators. However, access to capital continues to be high on the list of challenges faced by entrepreneurs. This National Small Business Week, [learn why](#) financing is a critical component for small business progress. *****

KNOWING MICHAEL COHEN -- "How Michael Cohen, Trump's Fixer, Built a Shadowy Business Empire," by NYT's William K. Rashbaum, Danny Hakim, Brian Rosenthal, Emily Flitter and Jesse Drucker: "He was a personal-injury lawyer who often worked out of taxi offices scattered around New York City. There was the one above the run-down auto repair garage on West 16th Street in Manhattan, on the edge of the Meatpacking District before it turned trendy. There was the single-story building with the garish yellow awning in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge. There was the tan brick place on a scruffy Manhattan side street often choked with double-parked taxis.

"And then there was his office on the 26th floor of Trump Tower overlooking Fifth Avenue, right next to the one belonging to Donald J. Trump. Before he joined the Trump Organization and became Mr. Trump's lawyer and do-it-all fixer, Michael D. Cohen was a hard-edge personal-injury attorney and businessman. Now a significant portion of his quarter-century business record is under the microscope of federal prosecutors - posing a potential threat not just to Mr. Cohen but also to the president." <https://nyti.ms/2wghxNU>

TRUMP INC. -- "As the 'King of Debt,' Trump borrowed to build his empire. Then he began spending hundreds of millions in cash," by WaPo's Jonathan O'Connell, David A. Fahrenthold and Jack Gillum: "In the nine years before he ran for president, Donald Trump's company spent more than \$400 million in cash on new properties - including 14 transactions paid for in full, without borrowing from banks - during a buying binge that defied real estate industry practices and Trump's own history as the self-described 'King of Debt.'

"Trump's vast outlay of cash, tracked through public records and totaled publicly here for the first time, provides a new window into the president's private company, which discloses few details about its finances. It shows that Trump had access to far more cash than previously known, despite his string of commercial bankruptcies and the Great Recession's hammering of the real estate industry." <https://wapo.st/2JZ7H4L>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Billions on the line for firms as Trump weighs Iran pullout," by AP's Jon Gambrell in Dubai: "From airplanes to oilfields, billions of dollars are on the line for international corporations as President Donald Trump weighs whether to pull America out of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

"Regardless of where they are headquartered, virtually all multinational corporations do business or banking in the U.S., meaning any return to pre-deal sanctions could torpedo deals made after the 2015 agreement came into force.

"That threat alone has been enough to scare risk-averse firms, like Boeing Co., into slow-walking deals agreed to months ago. A complete pullout by the U.S. would wreak further havoc and likely frighten off those considering making the plunge." <https://bit.ly/2IfMrur>

CHRISTOPHER CADELAGO: "Kirstjen Nielsen's tightrope act": "Nielsen, a cybersecurity expert who worked in the Bush administration, has stood alongside Trump in dialing up warnings about immigration as part of a strategy to deter additional people from coming to the U.S.

"Yet she's had to walk a tightrope, current and former aides said, picking her moments with Trump in private while preserving a working relationship with leaders here and abroad who view the administration's immigration policies as anathema to their values. 'It's a balancing act,' said one person who's worked with her." <https://politi.co/2wjS8Tm>

-- **@LucasFoxNews:** Texas Rep. Mac "Thornberry on Iran nuclear deal: 'Maybe the best thing is for the President to delay a bit more his deadline of this month and put the French and the British up to the test' on a new agreement, House Armed Services Chairman says on @FoxNewsSunday".

PRUITT FILES ...

-- **"EPA clamps down on document requests linked to Pruitt,"** by Alex Guillén: "Top aides to Scott Pruitt at the EPA are screening public records requests related to the embattled administrator, slowing the flow of information released under the Freedom of Information Act - at times beyond what the law allows."

"Internal emails obtained by POLITICO show that Pruitt's political appointees reviewed documents collected for most or all FOIA requests regarding his activities, even as he's drawn scrutiny for his use of first-class flights and undisclosed dealings with lobbyists." <https://politi.co/2wjUP7q>

2018 WATCH -- "Blankenship surging on eve of West Virginia Senate primary," by Alex Isenstadt: "There is growing concern among Republicans that Don Blankenship, a bombastic coal baron who has spent time in prison, is surging ahead of Tuesday's West Virginia Senate primary - and a last-minute campaign is underway to stop him. As the tight contest hurtles to a close, four Republicans said they'd reviewed polling conducted in recent days showing Blankenship, who spent a year in jail following the 2010 explosion at his Upper Big Branch Mine that killed 29 workers, moving narrowly ahead of his more mainstream GOP rivals, Rep. Evan Jenkins and state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey. ..."

"Many are convinced that a Blankenship win, coming just months after the disastrous Alabama Senate race, would destroy the party's prospects of defeating Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin in November." <https://politi.co/2rn5BnK>

-- **"Cordray-Kucinich primary serves as Democrats' first Midwest test of 2018,"** by Daniel Strauss: "[Richard] Cordray has led in sparse public polls of the primary, but [Dennis] Kucinich has still lurked within striking distance after a months-long stylistic debate about whether Democrats need an outspoken firebrand or a more pragmatic progressive to win Ohio. It could be a preview of Democratic primary contests to come in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin - and elsewhere around the country - as the party seeks to rebuild in the states." <https://politi.co/2KCOGX4>

YOU'RE INVITED ... We'll sit down with **NANCY PELOSI** this Tuesday in D.C. Six months ahead of Election Day. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/playbookpelosi>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Adult film actress Stormy Daniels speaks on the phone to President Donald Trump, played by actor Alec Baldwin, during an appearance on "Saturday Night Live" in New York on May 5. | Will Heath/NBC via AP

SPY GAMES - "Revealed: Trump team hired spy firm for 'dirty ops' on Iran arms

deal," by The Guardian's Mark Townsend and Julian Borger: "Aides to Donald Trump, the US president, hired an Israeli private intelligence agency to orchestrate a 'dirty ops' campaign against key individuals from the Obama administration who helped negotiate the Iran nuclear deal, the Observer can reveal. People in the Trump camp contacted private investigators in May last year to 'get dirt' on Ben Rhodes, who had been one of Barack Obama's top national security advisers, and Colin Kahl, deputy assistant to Obama, as part of an elaborate attempt to discredit the deal. ...

"According to incendiary documents seen by the Observer, investigators contracted by the private intelligence agency were told to dig into the personal lives and political careers of Rhodes ... and Kahl ... Among other things they were looking at personal relationships, any involvement with Iran-friendly lobbyists, and if they had benefited personally or politically from the peace deal." <http://bit.ly/2HUyoXN>

LIFE AFTER BUFFETT? -- "Warren Buffett Lays Out a Berkshire Hathaway Future Without Him," by WSJ's Nicole Friedman in Omaha: <https://on.wsj.com/2wjXIKU>

SPACE TALK -- "Elon Musk's SpaceX is using a powerful rocket technology. NASA advisers say it could put lives at risk," by WaPo's Christian Davenport: "When Elon Musk and his team at SpaceX were looking to make their Falcon 9 rocket even more powerful, they came up with a creative idea - keep the propellant at super-cold temperatures to shrink its size, allowing them to pack more of it into the tanks. But the approach comes with a major risk, according to some safety experts. At those extreme temperatures, the propellant would need to be loaded just before takeoff - while astronauts are aboard.

"An accident, or a spark, during this maneuver, known as 'load-and-go,' could set off an explosion. The proposal has raised alarms for members of Congress and NASA safety advisers as the agency and SpaceX prepare to launch humans into orbit as early as this year. One watchdog group labeled load-and-go a 'potential safety risk.' A NASA advisory group warned in a letter that the method was 'contrary to booster safety criteria that has been in place for over 50 years.'" <https://wapo.st/2KHVouO>

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses:** Access to capital is a critical factor in business growth, and *10,000 Small Businesses* both recognizes and addresses this reality. Throughout the program, small business owners learn how to find the best sources of capital to meet their business needs and stimulate growth. [Learn how](#) our *10,000 Small Businesses* graduates #MakeSmallBig year-round. *****

SNL COLD OPEN - "Michael Cohen Wiretap Cold Open": MICHAEL COHEN (played by Ben Stiller): "Hello, Stormy. This is Michael Cohen. Are you alone?" **STORMY** (played by herself): "Yes." **TRUMP** (Alec Baldwin): "And what are you wearing?" **STORMY**: "Excuse me?" **TRUMP**: "Okay Michael, I can take it from here." **COHEN**: "Okay, but as your attorney, I highly advise against you..." Trump hangs up on Cohen. **TRUMP**: "So, what up girl?" **STORMY**: "Hello, Donald." **TRUMP**: "Come on, Stormy. Stop making such a big deal about this. Everyone knows it's just an act."

STORMY: "I work in adult films, we're not really known for our acting."

TRUMP: "Just tell me: what do you need for this all to go away?" **STORMY:** "A resignation." **TRUMP:** "Yeah right, being president is like doing porn. Once you do it, it's hard to do anything else." ... **TRUMP:** "I solved North and South Korea, why can't I solve us?" **STORMY:** "Sorry Donald, it's too late for that. I know you don't believe in climate change but a storm's a coming baby." **TRUMP:** "I've never been so scared and so horny at the same time." **7-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2wcsGPE>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"Trafficked in America":** "FRONTLINE and the Investigative Reporting Program at U.C. Berkeley tell the inside story of Guatemalan teens forced to work against their will on an egg farm in Ohio." <https://to.pbs.org/2w6oCQQ> (h/t Kelly Sadler)

-- **"Rosi's Choice,"** by Justine van der Leun in VQR's Spring issue: "When a young mother fleeing violence in El Salvador faces long odds for asylum, it raises a crucial question: Who deserves sanctuary in America?" <http://bit.ly/2rgeCQs>

-- **"Virtuous Leadership and Restoring the American Dream,"** by Dave McCormick, adapted from his keynote address for the Rear Admiral Wetmore Ethics Forum, at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy early this year, in War on the Rocks: "[O]ur country would benefit greatly from the transition of those who have served in the military - men and women, young and old, from all races and religions - to leadership positions in civilian life in business, journalism, and particularly elected politics, where they can bring their values and experiences to bear." <http://bit.ly/2FFp9Jn>

-- **"Birds of a Feather,"** by Karen Abbott in Topic: "The relationship between humans and parrots can be surprisingly profound." <http://bit.ly/2Kxcr2M>

-- **"We've Lost 10 Years of Innovation. This Decade Has Been Boring for the Web,"** by Noah Kulwin in NYMag: "A conversation with Ethan Zuckerman, media scholar and inventor of the pop-up ad, on the original sin of advertising and the web's lost decade." <https://slct.al/2wgsdvl> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

-- **"An MSG Convert Visits the High Church of Umami,"** by Helen Rosner in the New Yorker: "Monosodium glutamate is a compound molecule: in it, glutamate, the amino acid responsible for the mysterious deepening of flavor, is stabilized by sodium, becoming something flaky and sprinkleable, like a fine, pearlescent salt. ... Glutamate occurs naturally in all the foods that we associate with umami: aged hard cheeses, tomatoes, mushrooms, dried and fermented fish and fish sauces, and savory condiments like Marmite and Worcestershire sauce." <http://bit.ly/2rj4RRj>

-- **"Wall Street's Big Gender Lawsuit Is 13 Years in the Making,"** by Dune Lawrence and Max Abelson in Bloomberg Businessweek: "Cristina Chen-Oster's fight with Goldman Sachs began in 2005. It just got huge." <https://bloom.bg/2wbQNY6>

-- "**Trump's Lawyer Went to the Worst Law School in America**," by Philip Shenon in POLITICO Magazine: "Michael Cohen's alma mater [Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan] has long been a punchline in the legal world." <https://politi.co/2rlqOiD>

-- "**Cairo: A Type of Love Story**," by the New Yorker's Peter Hessler: "Raising a family during a revolution." <http://bit.ly/2FLu5fz>

-- "**The Spy Who Came Home**," by the New Yorker's Ben Taub: "Why an expert in counterterrorism became a beat cop." <http://bit.ly/2wf3vfp>

-- "**Learning to Like Ike**," by Tevi Troy in the Weekly Standard: "The strategic savvy of an underestimated leader." <https://tw.s.io/2rmSKC6>

-- "**The Baby-Formula Crime Ring**," by Chris Pomorski in the N.Y. Times Magazine's Money issue: "It's pricey, it's portable, its users need it constantly, and retailers love to buy it at a discount. All of which makes it a perfect product to steal." <https://nyti.ms/2rlAMjc>

Playbookers

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED at Adrienne Arsht's Cinco de Mayo party last night: Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and his wife Mary, Jack Evans, Kellyanne Conway, Rita Braver and Bob Barnett, Ann and Lloyd Hand, Barbara Allbritton, Abby Blunt, Patrick Steel and Lee Satterfield, Sen Ed. Markey (D-Mass.) and Susan Blumenthal Markey, Chris Isham and Jennifer Maguire, Traci and Adam Bernstein, Kristin Mannion and HP Goldfield, Tom Bossert, Jodie McLean, Carol Melton, Gary Knell, Peru Amb. Carlos Pareja, Capricia Marshall, Michael LaRosa, Tom LeBlanc.

-- **SPOTTED** at a dinner last night at Sally Quinn's house to celebrate Jon Meacham, who on Tuesday releases a new book "The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels" -- (**\$19.66 on Amazon** <https://amzn.to/2wiS0n5> ... **NYT op-ed** <https://nyti.ms/2HYRtbB>): Michael Beschloss, Evan Thomas, Walter Isaacson, Maureen Dowd, Bob Costa, Martha Raddatz, Jeff Goldberg and Pam Reeves, Tony Blinken and Evan Ryan, Tammy Haddad, Andy Lack, Betsy Fischer Martin and Jonathan Martin, Phil Rucker, John Harris, Evelyn Farkas, Mary Jordan, Chuck Todd, Kasie Hunt, Richard Cohen and Patricia Duff.

-- **MEACHAM** was on "Meet the Press" this morning and will be on "Morning Joe" on Monday. He'll also do events in Washington for Politics and Prose with Chris Matthews at GW tonight and at the New-York Historical Society with Willie Geist on Wednesday.

-- **SPOTTED** at Mike and Shannon Dubke's annual Kentucky Derby party yesterday at their house in Alexandria: Reince and Sally Priebus, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and

Bryan Sanders, Hogan Gidley, Mike Sommers, Craig Purser, Brian Wild, Brian Jones, Carl Forti, Stuart Roy, Hazen Marshall, Greg Crist, Michael Meehan, Ben Ginsberg, Zeke Miller, Steve Holland, Danny Diaz, Matt Rhoades, George Sifakis, Steven Law, Les Brorsen.

-- **SPOTTED** at Gold Cup yesterday in Virginia: John Arundel, Tom Quinn, Amanda Lee House, Ian Mason, Yebbie Watkins, former Rep. Tom McMillen (D-Md.), Neil King, Lauren Ehram and Jason Gorey, Felix Browne, Kaitlan Collins, Ryan Jackson, Kenny Day, Sean and Alyssa Hackbarth, Irish Amb. Dan Mulhall, Ben Droz

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- HILLARY ALUMNI -- Tyrone Gayle, press secretary for Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and an HFA and DCCC alum, on Saturday married **Beth Foster**, military legislative assistant for Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and a DOD and OFA alum, in a wedding at Seven Oaks Farm outside Charlottesville, Va., in a ceremony officiated by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.). Gayle was Kaine's body man on his 2012 campaign. **NYT announcement** <https://nyti.ms/2HYaUBc> ... **Wedding pics** <http://bit.ly/2FNXw0G> ... **The couple cutting a pie -- (they had a variety of pies from a local Charlottesville shop instead of having a traditional wedding cake)** <http://bit.ly/2rpu8Zg>

SPOTTED: Anne Holton, best man Ian Sams, maid of honor Sarah Schultz and Andy Kroll, Lily Adams, Emmy Bengtson, Rebecca Chalif, Jesse Lehigh, Miryam Lipper, Lizzy Chan, Alex Phillips, Corey Ciorciari, Dan Merica and Monica Alba, Doug Thornell, Rodell Mollineau and Sheena Arora, Chris Harris and Kate Conway, Tyler Law, Franklin Davis, Malcom Glenn, Kate Harloe, Sasha and Sam Baker, Max Lesko and Allison Zelman, Beth Burke, Jess Goldstein.

-- **"Adrienne Watson, William Jennings"** - N.Y. Times: "The bride, 30, works in Washington as the deputy communications director for the Democratic Party and director of its war room, used for political planning, strategizing and project management. She previously served as a spokeswoman for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. She graduated from Indiana University. ...

"The groom, 34, directs public engagement for PredictIt, a real-money political-prediction market headquartered in Washington. He graduated from the University of Arkansas and did press advance for President Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns. He is also a drummer with the Invisibles, a Washington-based rock band."
<https://nyti.ms/2HUHGRc>

-- **SPOTTED:** best man/brother of the groom Clark Jennings and wife Mary Jennings, Tom and Carol Wheeler, former Rep. Baron Hill (D-Ind.), Adrienne Elrod, Ryan Guthrie and Alisa La, Joel Riethmiller, Jessa Merrill and Jack Rogers, Heidi Reutebuch

HAPPY 18th ANNIVERSARY to Jamie Smith and Eric Pierce

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Kate Bates, president of the Arlington (Va.) Chamber of

Commerce (hat tip: Bruce Potter) ... Ashton Weinberger

BIRTHDAYS: Tucker Eskew ... Tony Blair is 65 ... Jim Gartman ... Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) is 84 ... Sheena Arora, senior manager for corporate responsibility at PwC ... David Rogers ... Bloomberg's Joe Nocera ... Politico Albany bureau chief Jimmy Vielkind ... Steve Lindsey is 62 ... Dani Lever, press secretary for Gov. Cuomo ... Seth Freedland, senior writer at Nike ... Stefan Friedman, partner at Mercury ... Spencer Pederson ... Cynara Lilly, principal at RALLY ... NPR's Jennifer Longmire-Wright ... Cara Philbin ... Kevin Powers, MBA candidate at London Business School ... Liza Romanow, Albright Stonebridge Group analyst and comms assistant to Madeleine Albright ... James Kariuki, director of Diplomacy 20:20, the UK Foreign & Commercial Office's change program (h/ts Ben Chang) ... Laura Evans Manatos (h/t Melanie Fonder Kaye) ...

... **Alyse Cohen** is 3-0 ... Mark Armour ... Obama Treasury alum Benjamin Levine ... Max Giammetta of WTTG-5 (h/t Kelley McCormick) ... Meek Mill is 31 - tonight at 7 p.m. ET, NBC airs a Dateline NBC exclusive: "Dreams and Nightmares: The Meek Mill Story" (h/t Lester Holt) ... WSJ's Telis Demos ... Cara Philbin ... Lisa Ferri ... Rebecca Powell Marx ... Natasha Mozgovaya ... Paul Schmitz is 49 ... Bob McCall ... Jim Williams ... Bill Dolbow ... WH alumnus John Roberts ... Rosa Puech ... Jim Ramstad ... Mark Armour ... Woodfen McLean (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses*:** Securing capital often provides the fuel needed to propel small business growth. Program data shows that *10,000 Small Businesses* graduates who acquire financing create jobs and grow revenue more frequently. [Learn how](#) our *10,000 Small Businesses* graduates #MakeSmallBig year-round. *****

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pounder
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 11:19:46 PM
Subject: Re: Media Clip Service

Great. Will give a buzz then. Thanks again.

On Wed, Jun 21, 2017 at 6:03 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Mr. Pounder,

Yes, 11:30 am would work. I'll look forward to talking with you.

George

From: Joe Pounder [mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 5:58 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Media Clip Service

Mr. Hull,

Sorry about that. My schedule was pretty jammed. Are you available at either 10:30am or 11:30am tomorrow? Happy to connect and can just give your number below a buzz. Thanks and let me know what works best.

Joe

On Wed, Jun 21, 2017 at 4:23 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Mr. Pounder,

I'm following up on a phone message I left you several days ago. As I said in that message, I believe you have corresponded with my colleague, Jahan Wilcox. I'm reaching out to ask to speak with you about services you can offer in capturing media content for us. Please let me know when we can talk. My contact information is below.

George Hull

Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator

Office of Public Affairs

U.S. EPA

Tel. 202-564-0790

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pounder
Sent: Wed 6/21/2017 9:57:41 PM
Subject: Re: Media Clip Service

Mr. Hull,
Sorry about that. My schedule was pretty jammed. Are you available at either 10:30am or 11:30am tomorrow? Happy to connect and can just give your number below a buzz. Thanks and let me know what works best.

Joe

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George Hull

Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator

Office of Public Affairs

U.S. EPA

Tel. 202-564-0790

--

Joe Pounder
jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Lisa Friedman[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:20:07 PM
Subject: RE: Follow up question on MJ story

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Jason Abbruzzese[jason@mashable.com]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov];
Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:51:37 PM
Subject: RE: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Jason Abbruzzese [mailto:jason@mashable.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:49 AM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

Greetings,

Jason Abbruzzese from Mashable here. I'm following up on the Mother Jones report that the EPA has been contracting Definers Public Affairs.

I'd love to know what kind of worker Definers has been doing for the EPA. Think someone could fill me in?

Cheers,

Jason

--

Jason Abbruzzese

News Editor

617 697 3390 (Cell, please text first)

Mashable

@JasonAbbruzzese

To: Jason Abbruzzese[jason@mashable.com]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:52:09 PM
Subject: RE: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Jason Abbruzzese [mailto:jason@mashable.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:49 AM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

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Jason Abbruzzese

News Editor

617 697 3390 (Cell, please text first)

Mashable

@JasonAbbruzzese

To: Lisa Friedman[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 6:41:25 PM
Subject: RE: Follow up question on MJ story

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:21 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Follow up question on MJ story

And why was this a no-bid contract when other companies perform the same service?

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

On Dec 15, 2017, at 10:20 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition

Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

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Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 9:32:18 PM
Subject: Re: apologies for all the back and forth

Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services.

This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient.

If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.

> On Dec 15, 2017, at 3:09 PM, Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com> wrote:
>
> But a few more things were just brought to my attention that require a few more questions.
>
> America Rising, which as you know shares top leadership with Definers Corp., has filed more than 200 FOIAs with EPA since 2015. Most recently they have requested information, including emails and other data, about a number of EPA employees - including many who have spoken out publicly against the agency like Betsy Southerland, Michael Cox and John O'Grady.
>
> Can you please offer me a comment on whether EPA believes it is appropriate to hire a firm that shares ownership with an organization that has investigated its employees?
>
> Thank you
> Lisa
>
> --
> Lisa Friedman
> Reporter, New York Times
> (202) 862-0306 office
> (202) 251-2083 cell
>

To: Marsh, Rene[Rene.Marsh@cnn.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]; Wallace, Gregory[gregory.wallace@turner.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 9:47:04 PM
Subject: Re: CNN

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

On Dec 15, 2017, at 4:44 PM, Marsh, Rene <Rene.Marsh@cnn.com> wrote:

Hello,

CNN has learned On December 7, EPA signed a \$120,000 one-year contract for "news analysis and brief service" with Definer Public Affairs, a Republican opposition research firm. CNN is looking for information on why this company was hired? Why it was a no bid contract?

Thank you,

— René Marsh

CNN

Correspondent

Twitter: @Rene_MarshCNN

Office: 202- 777-7249

To: Marsh, Rene[Rene.Marsh@cnn.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]; Wallace, Gregory[gregory.wallace@turner.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 9:48:56 PM
Subject: Re: CNN

It's also not accurate to call it a no-bid contract. Below is our statement about that as well:

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

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Thank you,

— René Marsh

CNN

Correspondent

Twitter: @Rene_MarshCNN

Office: 202- 777-7249

To: Kathryn Watson[kathryn.watson@cbsinteractive.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Sat 12/16/2017 5:46:44 PM
Subject: Re: Reaching out re NYT story + decision to hire Definers

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 16, 2017, at 11:47 AM, Kathryn Watson <kathryn.watson@cbsinteractive.com> wrote:

Good morning,

I wanted to reach out after the [NYT story published last night](#) described the EPA's decision to hire Definers to handle media work.

Specifically, I wanted to confirm the details of the contract — \$120,000 to handle media, which apparently was cheaper than the last deal?

But I also wanted to know if anyone at the EPA in any way directed Definers to look into EPA employees who might contradict the president's agenda?

Thank you, and my cell is [571-282-8391](tel:571-282-8391).

--

Kathryn (Katie) Watson
Politics Reporter, [CBS Digital](#)
Cell: 571.282.8391
Twitter: [@kathrynw5](#)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 12/2/2017 3:32:55 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: TAX BILL sneaks through Senate just before 2 a.m. -- SEUNG MIN KIM talks to MCCONNELL about how he got a win on taxes -- SPOTTED at the WH Xmas media party -- KUSHNER working on Middle East peace without REX

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

[Visit the online home of Playbook](#)

Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP walked out of the White House this morning and took questions from the press, according to pooler James Osborne of the Houston Chronicle.

-- ON THE SENATE TAX BILL: "It was a fantastic evening last night. We passed the largest tax cuts in the history of our country and many other things along with it. Now we go onto conference and something beautiful is going to come out of that mixer. People are going to be very, very happy. They're going to get tremendous, tremendous tax cuts and tax relief, and that's what this country needs. Business tax all the way down from 35 to 20. It could be 22 when it comes out but it could also be 20. We'll see what ultimately comes out."

-- ON FLYNN: "What has been shown is no collusion, no collusion. There's been absolutely no collusion, so we're very happy. And frankly last night was one of the big nights. We'll see what happens."

Trump left at 9 a.m. for Joint Base Andrews for a day trip to New York City.

ONE STEP CLOSER TO A LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENT -- A.P. BULLETIN at 1:51 a.m.: "WASHINGTON (AP) - Senate narrowly OKs near-\$1.5 trillion tax bill, pushing President Trump and GOP close to year's biggest legislative win."

-- SEUNG MIN KIM, BRIAN FALER, COLIN WILHELM and BERNIE BECKER: "The 51 to 49 vote came after Senate Republicans frantically rewrote the multi-trillion dollar legislation behind closed doors to win over several final holdouts, and left congressional Republicans just a few steps away from sending legislation to President Donald Trump's

desk. The House passed its own plan in November.

"Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee was the only Republican to oppose the measure, in what's also a big victory for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who repeatedly fell short in his efforts to push through an Obamacare repeal measure this year. 'I think one reason we were able to get there was because there's widespread interest,' McConnell said in an interview with POLITICO. 'Every single member of our conference wanted to get to yes, and all but one did.'" <http://politi.co/2AkigOo>

-- WAPO'S HEATHER LONG: "How an unequal tax cut grew more unequal": "As Republicans moved closer to a final vote on the bill Friday night, they made several tweaks to the tax legislation. They announced more benefits for business owners, particularly wealthy ones, but they voted down a proposal by Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) to give low-income families a bigger tax break.

"The disparate treatment underlined how the legislation -- a massive rewrite of the individual and corporate tax code -- has evolved since its first incarnation: What began as an effort that would favor wealthy individuals and corporations became, in many ways, even more tilted in their favor as the legislation made its way through the Senate.

"Rubio and Lee had suggested paying for their idea by lowering the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent instead of 20 percent. 'We could have helped so much more,' an exasperated Rubio had said earlier Friday, anticipating defeat. 'With less than that one percent difference, we can make a huge difference in the lives of millions of Americans making between \$20,000 and \$50,000.'" <http://wapo.st/2kiGcff>

-- "A Hasty, Hand-Scribbled Tax Bill Sets Off an Outcry," by NYT's Jim Tankersley and Alan Rappeport: "By midafternoon on Friday, Republicans had the votes to pass their tax bill in the Senate. What they did not have was a bill. The legislation, covering nearly 500 pages, finally surfaced well after the sun had set. It appeared first in the lobbying shops of K Street, which sent back copies to some Democrats in the Senate, who took to social media to protest being asked to vote in a matter of hours on a bill that had yet to be shared with them directly. The drafts that leaked to journalists included changes scrawled in looping handwriting in the margins. Democrats posted screenshots and accompanying complaints." <http://nyti.ms/2AoY9wz>

-- @SenatorTester: "I was just handed a 479-page tax bill a few hours before the vote. One page literally has hand scribbled policy changes on it that can't be read. This is Washington, D.C. at its worst. Montanans deserve so much better." **1-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2nneEGG>

-- ONE SMALL DEM VICTORY: "Democrats defeat GOP bid to shield conservative college from endowment tax," by Michael Stratford: "Four Senate Republicans joined with Democrats to strip from the GOP tax bill a last-minute provision that would have shielded Hillsdale College, a prominent conservative school, from a new tax on university endowments. An amendment offered by Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) - and

incorporated into a package of changes Republicans unveiled Friday evening to their tax plan, H.R. 1 (115) - would have exempted all colleges that don't accept federal student aid from the endowment tax.

"But Democrats immediately cried foul over the plan because it appeared to benefit only a single college, Hillsdale College, whose president, Larry Arnn, is influential in conservative intellectual circles. Arnn, who was floated last year as a potential pick to be President Donald Trump's Education secretary, has served as a Heritage Foundation trustee since 2002. The school also has close ties to the family of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

"Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Deb Fischer of Nebraska, John Kennedy of Louisiana, and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska joined with Democrats early Saturday morning to pass an amendment by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) that stripped the provision from the tax bill." <http://politi.co/2BFpX00>

THE SEUNG MIN KIM QUICK-TURN TICK TOCK (published at 3:16 a.m.) -- **WITH MCCONNELL INTERVIEW: "How McConnell got a win on taxes":** "On a recent phone call to discuss the GOP's tax push, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested President Donald Trump focus his personal lobbying efforts on one senator in particular: Ron Johnson. For weeks, the Wisconsin Republican had made it clear he would seek more generous tax treatment of certain small businesses - and that he was willing to use his vote as leverage.

"But after several phone calls from Trump and one final negotiating session inside Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn's ornate Capitol office, Johnson said early Friday he would finally support the bill. That announcement made passage seem all but inevitable just one night after the bill nearly collapsed in spectacular fashion on the Senate floor. McConnell and his leadership team ultimately secured passage of the tax code rewrite in the early hours of Saturday morning after weeks of methodically working each wavering vote, and by trying to learn the lessons of their Obamacare repeal failure.

"It worked. By moving the tax bill through the committee process and letting more GOP senators give more input as they drafted the bill, the Kentucky Republican delivered a sorely-needed legislative achievement to his party in a year marked by turbulence on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue." <http://politi.co/2norXXm>

MCCONNELL ASSESSMENT OF THE YEAR: "It's been quite a year for Senate Republicans," McConnell said in an interview with POLITICO as the chamber prepared to pass the bill. "We've changed the Supreme Court for a generation and done the first comprehensive tax reform in 31 years. Big year for us."

TRUMP ON REPUBLICANS -- @realDonaldTrump at 7:54 a.m.: "Biggest Tax Bill and Tax Cuts in history just passed in the Senate. Now these great Republicans will be going for final passage. Thank you to House and Senate Republicans for your hard work and commitment!"

THE MACRO -- The Republican Senate passed the largest rewrite of the tax code in a generation, after failing to gut the health care law championed by President Barack Obama. **THE MICRO** -- This passed at nearly 2 a.m. after a slew of backroom deals between Republican leaders and senators. This is the same stuff the GOP nailed Democrats on for years.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW? -- The House will vote on Monday to begin a formal negotiation -- called a conference -- to reconcile the differences in the two bills. Senior aides we speak to think a conference will go pretty quickly.

REMEMBER: The government shuts down in less than a week. There are severe misgivings about the GOP plan to pass a short-term funding bill until Dec. 22, and then another until January. But the House GOP announced Saturday morning that they would proceed with that plan, scheduling a meeting of the Rules Committee to set the guidelines for debate.

***** **A message from PhRMA: How much are hospitals marking up medicine prices?** According to new Moran Company analysis, hospitals mark up medicine prices nearly 500 percent. The analysis of 20 medicines also found a hospital is paid 2.5 times what the biopharmaceutical company, who brought the medicine to market, receives. Read more: <http://onphr.ma/2hSagox> *****

BREAKING at 10:06 a.m.: "LANSING, Mich. (AP) - 3 Democrats tell AP longtime Democratic Rep. Sander Levin of Michigan to retire, won't seek re-election to 19th term."

SPLIT SCREEN -- PELOSI, DCCC CHAIRMAN call for Rep. Ruben Kihuen (D-Nev.) to resign.

-- **THE STORY: BUZZFEED'S KATE NOCERA and TARINI PARTI: "She Says She Quit Her Campaign Job After He Harassed Her. Now He's In Congress":** "Last year, a 25-year-old woman left her job on Democratic Rep. Ruben Kihuen's campaign because of what she says were repeated, unwanted propositions for dates and sex. ... Kihuen said on Friday, 'I sincerely apologize for anything that I may have said or done that made her feel uncomfortable.'

"On Feb. 6, 2016, Samantha says she accompanied Kihuen to a fundraiser - a normal function of her job as finance director. As she attempted to leave when the event wrapped up, she says Kihuen walked her to her car. 'He followed me to my car and said, "You look really good, I'd like to take you out if you didn't work for me,"' she recalled. Samantha said she quickly stated that she had a boyfriend, got in her car, and left. The advances became more frequent and more aggressive after that, asking if she had ever 'cheated on her boyfriend' and repeating that he would take her out if she did not work for him.

"On Feb. 19, Samantha says she accompanied Kihuen to a meeting with Rep. Tony Cárdenas at the Aria Hotel. Cárdenas was in town to support presidential candidate Hillary Clinton ahead of the Nevada caucuses. Cárdenas' office confirmed that he and his wife stayed in the hotel that weekend. In the elevator on the way to the meeting, Samantha said Kihuen told her, 'We should get a hotel room here.'

"I said 'no' very firmly and he just laughed at me. It was humiliating," she told BuzzFeed News. Kihuen drove on the way back from the meeting to their campaign office, with Samantha in the passenger seat. Samantha said Kihuen again asked if she'd ever cheated on her boyfriend, and started touching her thigh. She told him to stop, and said she said 'no' and began talking about her boyfriend. A separate time, in March, Kihuen asked for help with something on the computer during 'call time' -- when a candidate makes fundraising calls -- and Samantha alleges he grabbed the back of her thigh while she looked at the screen." <http://bzfd.it/2j9GaTj>

-- HEATHER CAYGLE and ELANA SCHOR: "House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi is calling on Nevada Rep. Ruben Kihuen to resign amid allegations that the freshman Democrat sexually harassed a campaign staffer during the 2016 election. 'In Congress, no one should face sexual harassment in order to work in an office or in a campaign. The young woman's documented account is convincing, and I commend her for the courage it took to come forward,' Pelosi said in a statement after talking with Kihuen. 'In light of these upsetting allegations, Congressman Kihuen should resign.' ...

"Members and candidates must be held to the highest standard. If anyone is guilty of sexual harassment or sexual assault, they should not hold elected office. Congressman Kihuen should resign,' Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said in a statement. Kihuen signaled Friday evening that he did not intend to resign." <http://politi.co/2AE1j26>

-- IT'S WORTH NOTING: House Democratic leaders moved much faster here than they did when Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) was accused of improper behavior. Pelosi and DCCC Chair Ben Ray Lujan both called for Kihuen's resignation on the same day the report surfaced. It took Pelosi several days before she called for Conyers to step down.

DEMOCRATIC OPERATIVES we talk to tell us the more closely the Democratic Party is associated with the "swamp" the harder it is for them to be able to pick up seats and make a real run at the majority. That's why you'll see them move swiftly to throw lawmakers overboard.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AISLE -- "Republicans divided on Farenthold resignation," by John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade: "Speaker Paul Ryan and his conference's top advocate on sexual harassment appear divided about whether Rep. Blake Farenthold should resign following news of his taxpayer-funded sexual harassment settlement. Ryan will not call on the Texas Republican to resign following a POLITICO report that he used \$84,000 in taxpayer funds to pay off an accuser, his office said Friday night -- even though he has called for Democratic Rep. John Conyers

(D-Mich.) to step aside over similar sexual harassment allegations.

"But GOP Rep. Barbara Comstock (Va.), who's led the charge for Republicans against sexual harassment on Capitol Hill, said through a spokesperson that Farenthold should step aside. Comstock also called on Farenthold to reimburse taxpayers for the full \$84,000 settlement and for both parties to waive their confidentiality agreement so they can testify about what happened." <http://politi.co/2Bt3FgX>

OTHER SETTLEMENTS COME TO LIGHT -- "Gowdy, Benghazi panel settled wrongful firing suit with \$150,000 in public funds," by WaPo's Elise Viebeck and Michelle Ye Hee Lee: "As chairman of the House Select Committee on Benghazi, Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) used \$150,000 in taxpayer dollars to settle with a former aide who alleged he was fired in part because he was not willing to focus his investigative work on Hillary Clinton. The Post confirmed the confidential settlement reached between Gowdy and the Benghazi panel and Bradley Podliska after it appeared in a list of settlements released Friday by the congressional Office of Compliance. Gowdy is now the chairman of the House Oversight Committee." <http://wapo.st/2AAuwLI>

MUELLER WATCH -- "Trump keeps playing nice with Mueller, for now," by Darren Samuelsohn: "President Donald Trump's lawyers have been counseling him since this past summer to play nice with special counsel Robert Mueller. Cooperation with the Russia probe, the president's attorneys have argued, is the best path to the exoneration Trump has craved all year - a way not just to get things over with quickly, but also to signal to prosecutors that the administration has good intentions and nothing to hide.

"Now, as Mueller's probe moves deeper into the president's inner circle, some of Trump's longtime advisers are urging him to stick with the approach outlined by White House lawyer Ty Cobb. 'Take a deep breath, follow Ty Cobb's lead, trust the process,' said former Trump legal spokesman Mark Corallo. 'Antagonizing prosecutors is never a good idea. This is not arbitration. This is not mergers and acquisitions. This is not real estate law. This is criminal law. Prosecutors can do things with their almost unlimited resources, time and authority.'" <http://politi.co/2Aladkh>

THE MICHAEL FLYNN EARTHQUAKE -- "Mueller's swift moves signal mounting legal peril for the White House," by WaPo's Ros Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Karen DeYoung: "According to the filings, Flynn consulted with multiple senior Trump officials during the transition. One adviser, described in court documents as a 'very senior member' of the transition team, directed Flynn in December to reach out to Kislyak and lobby him about a United Nations resolution on Israeli settlements. People familiar with the investigation identified the adviser as Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Kushner lawyer Abbe Lowell declined to comment.

"Likewise, Flynn spoke to Kislyak about new U.S. sanctions imposed on Russia by President Barack Obama in late December only after discussing the matter with a senior Trump official who had accompanied him on a trip to Trump's private Mar-a-Lago club ... The senior official was Flynn's deputy, K.T. McFarland, according to two people

familiar with the conversation." <http://wapo.st/2i7UvPo>

--**"Trump White House caught off guard by Flynn plea,"** by Andrew Restuccia, Annie Karni and Nancy Cook: "[T]here is a growing sense of dread among Trump's closest confidants that the noose is tightening - if not around the president, then around his closest advisers and family members. ... One person close to the White House described the mood this way: 'What they're freaked out about is that there are no leaks. Papadopoulos didn't leak. Flynn didn't leak. They feel like they can't trust anyone. Their own counsel didn't know.'" <http://politi.co/2AzNukZ>

-- **"Trump Fumed for Weeks About Flynn Turning on Him,"** by The Daily Beast's Lachlan Markay and Asawainn Suebsaeng: "For weeks, Trump has vented privately to advisers and confidants about his anxiety over signs that Flynn had flipped. He noted the possibility that Flynn had 'turned on me,' three sources close to the president independently recall him saying. These sources had relayed details of these conversations to The Daily Beast over the course of the past week." <http://thebea.st/2izAFjQ>

-- **JEFFREY TOOBIN in The New Yorker, "Michael Flynn's Guilty Plea Sends Donald Trump's Lawyers Scrambling:** The President insists that the investigations into Russian meddling amount to nothing more than fake news. But the truth is now emerging." <http://bit.ly/2jElaSV>

-- **"What Michael Flynn's Plea Deal Means: Eleven legal experts weigh in" --** POLITICO Magazine: <http://politi.co/2jDLhuH>

HMM -- @brianstelster: "Via CNN's @GloriaBorger: 'One source close to the president attempted to mitigate the severity of the charge against Flynn by pointing out that everyone lies in Washington.'"

PIC DU JOUR -- @mflynnJR: "Family is the most important thing in life.....don't ever take yours for granted. Thanks everyone for the support." <http://bit.ly/2As9Na9>

--**@TheDailyShow:** "Curl up and enjoy the Mike Flynn 'Lock Her Up' Yule Log, just in time for the holiday season!" <http://bit.ly/2j91M2j> (h/t Matt Negrin)

OOPS: "ABC News corrects bombshell Flynn report," by CNN's Oliver Darcy: "ABC News on Friday evening corrected an explosive special report that aired in the morning saying that Donald Trump, as a candidate for president, had asked Michael Flynn to make contact with Russians. During 'World News Tonight,' ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross said the source who had provided the initial information for his story later told him that it was as president-elect, not as a candidate, that Trump asked Flynn to contact the Russians.

"The initial report, based on one anonymous source, prompted a dramatic reaction in the financial markets, and the Dow fell more than 350 points. ... A tweet published by

ABC News containing Ross' initial report had been retweeted more than 25,000 times and embedded in various news stories online before it was deleted. ABC posted a 'clarification' on Twitter around 8 p.m." <http://cnnmon.ie/2i8YMLu>

TRUMP'S SATURDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is in New York. He speaks at a breakfast fundraiser at 11:20 a.m., an RNC lunch fundraiser at 12:35 p.m., participates in an RNC roundtable at 1:40 p.m. and arrives back in D.C. by 4:45 p.m.

SIREN -- WAPO: "Alabama race is neck and neck, with voters divided over Roy Moore allegations, poll finds," by Michael Scherer and Scott Clement: "With less than two weeks to go, support for Democrat Doug Jones stands at 50 percent vs. [Republican Roy] Moore's 47 percent support among likely voters -- a margin of a scant three points that sets up a nail-biter for the oddly timed Dec. 12 special election." <http://wapo.st/2iCcMrO>

-- AP'S STEVE PEOPLES: "Alabama Republican Roy Moore has celebrated his isolated fight against the political establishment in both parties. The outsider story may resonate with Alabama voters, but the reality has a clear downside: The Senate candidate and his allies are almost completely cut off from the GOP's traditional donor network and struggling to raise money for the final-weeks sprint to Election Day. Federal fundraising reports released Friday reveal that Moore is losing the battle for campaign cash to Democrat Doug Jones. And he's losing badly. Moore raised \$1.7 million from Oct. 1 to Nov. 22, according to a filing with the Federal Election Commission. Jones raised \$9.9 million over the same period." <http://bit.ly/2i9PxBv>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Minutes after slamming 'fake news,' Trump welcomes 'my friends in the media' for Christmas party: President tells reporters they are 'honestly in many ways very special people - at least many of you,'" by Jason Schwartz: "After spending most of the year attacking the media's credibility, President Donald Trump gave brief, but friendly, welcoming remarks to a large turnout of reporters and editors at his White House Christmas party on Friday afternoon. Those in attendance described the event as, in many ways, like any other White House holiday party ...

"Following his remarks, which lasted two minutes, Trump spent another two or three minutes shaking hands near the front of the crowd before leaving ... In previous years, presidents have stayed usually for about two hours to take pictures with media members. White House chief of staff John Kelly, press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders and counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway made appearances, though many senior administration officials skipped the party or stayed only a brief time." <http://politi.co/2iDj3n1>

SPOTTED: Kellyanne Conway chatting with Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity, James Rosen, Steve Doocy chatting with Greta Van Susteren, John Coale, Jonathan Karl, Devin Dwyer, Justin Fishel, Michael Anton, Hogan Gidley, Brian Kilmeade, Annie Linskey, Matt Viser, Jen Jacobs, Michael Falcone, Kevin Cirilli, Jesse Watters, Howard Kurtz and Judy Kurtz, Hunter Walker, Byron York, Francesca Chambers, Peter Doocy,

Trey Yingst, Chris Isham, Charlie Spiering, Eliana Johnson, Annie Karni, Tara Palmeri, Craig Gordon, Alex Pappas, Ed Henry, Norah O'Donnell, Jackie Alemany, Louise Dufresne, Kristen Welker, Louise Radnofsky, Alice Lloyd, Jeff Mason, Steve Thomma.

YOU'RE INVITED -- Our first live podcast taping next Thursday night (Dec. 7) at 7 p.m. at Sixth and I. Our inaugural guests: **MICHAEL BARBARO**, host of the New York Times' hit podcast "The Daily," **DCCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAN SENA** and **NRCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN ROGERS**. And a panel of **POLITICO** stars: **RACHAEL BADE**, **SEUNG MIN KIM** and **ANNIE KARNI**. Get your tickets now!

<http://bit.ly/2hWK7tF>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) gives a thumbs-up as he and his Director of Operations Stephanie Muchow head for the Senate floor on Dec. 1. | Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

TV MONDAY - THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER: "Billy Bush Books 'Late Show With Stephen Colbert,' Appearance": <http://bit.ly/2jGoOx4>

TRUMP WHITE HOUSE DEPARTURE LOUNGE - "Former White House southeast political director running Tennessee Senate campaign," by Daniel Strauss and Daniel Lippman: "Thomas Midanek, formerly the White House southeast regional political director, has left the Trump administration and joined former Tennessee Rep. Stephen Fincher's Senate campaign as campaign manager." <http://politi.co/2jEvJXg>

HOLY LAND READ -- "Trump inches toward moving U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem," by Andrew Restuccia and Eliana Johnson: "President Donald Trump and his senior aides are mulling a plan to eventually move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a decision that could derail Trump's attempts to restart peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians. A leading option under consideration: temporarily keeping the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv while also outlining a longer-term strategy to begin the process of moving the embassy to Jerusalem, according to two administration officials. The plan is meant to strike a middle ground on the politically treacherous issue. One of the officials also said the administration is weighing whether to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel." <http://politi.co/2zSjVeY>

FLYING SOLO -- "Kushner Is Leaving Tillerson in the Dark on Middle East Talks, Sources Say," by Bloomberg's Nick Wadhams and Erik Schatzker: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is increasingly alarmed by what he sees as secret talks between Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman -- fearful that the discussions could backfire and tip the region into chaos, according to three people familiar with Tillerson's concerns.

"The central goal of the Kushner-Prince Mohammed negotiations ... is for an historic agreement featuring the creation of a Palestinian state or territory backed financially by a number of countries including Saudi Arabia, which could put tens of billions of dollars toward the effort. ... Tillerson believes Kushner hasn't done enough to share details of the talks with the State Department ... leaving senior U.S. diplomats in the dark on the full extent of the highly sensitive negotiations."
<https://bloom.bg/2AkDBqR>

***** **A message from PhRMA:** According to new analysis from the Moran Company, hospitals mark up medicine prices, on average, nearly 500 percent. The analysis of 20 medicines also found a hospital is paid 2.5 times what the biopharmaceutical company, who brought the medicine to market, receives. While hospital markups lead to higher costs for patients, employers and payers, these markups are often overlooked in conversations about medicine costs. As the provider market continues to become more concentrated and the number of medicines being administered in hospital-owned facilities is growing, the amount hospitals mark up medicine prices needs greater scrutiny. <http://onphr.ma/2BaOTOa> *****

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker -- **14 keepers** <http://politi.co/2Apl7Co>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Where Millennials Come From,"** by Jia Tolentino in the New Yorker: "Millennials, according to recent headlines, are killing hotels, department stores, chain restaurants, the car industry, the diamond industry, the napkin industry, homeownership, marriage, doorbells, motorcycles, fabric softener, hotel-loyalty programs, casinos, Goldman Sachs, serendipity, and the McDonald's McWrap." <http://bit.ly/2AbIR1y>

--**"How Peter Thiel and the Stanford Review Built a Silicon Valley Empire,"** by Andrew Granato in Stanford Politics: "But 30 years ago, as a sophomore at Stanford, Thiel ... co-founded ... the Stanford Review. ... Thiel continues to meet with the publication's editors, and he is substantially more open with them about his beliefs than he is with the general public, including on highly controversial issues like race and immigration. And across the Bay Area, many of The Review's alumni, spearheaded by Thiel, have built a relatively small but tight-knit network that extends across three decades and has a net worth that extends into the billions." <http://bit.ly/2j8PgQd>

--**"Feeding Puerto Rico,"** by Anderson Cooper in CBS' "60 Minutes": "José Andrés has some 30 popular restaurants across the United States, but he's barely stepped foot in them for two months. He and an army of chefs and volunteers have been serving the people in Puerto Rico." <http://cbsn.ws/2AzbNjJ>

--**"A failed vision,"** by LA Times' Richard Marosi in Veracruz, Mexico: "Mexico promised affordable housing for all. Instead it created many rapidly decaying slums."

<http://lat.ms/2AbBxI4>

--"**When Does a Watershed Become a Sex Panic?**" by Masha Gessen in the New Yorker: <http://bit.ly/2mqEcSK>

--"**On the other side of the catcall,**" by Natalie Johnson in March 2014 in the Libertarian Republic: "I have never in my life been more aware of my gender until I traveled to Europe. This is not to say that I didn't feel objectified and degraded through various forms of harassment prior to studying abroad. ... This unexplainable feeling of entitlement that many men have toward women is nothing new to me. However, I have never in my life experienced it to the scale that I have while abroad." <http://bit.ly/2BCrfc9>

--"**Kick Against the Pricks,**" by Laura Kipnis in the N.Y. Review of Books, reviewing "Be Fierce: Stop Harassment and Take Your Power Back," by Gretchen Carlson: "Toppling power isn't about storming the Bastille these days, it's about changing the way people talk and think. Creating a crisis of authority for those in power is how the world changes. But we're reminded by recent events that the agents of progress can be unlikely: just as the military was a major force in desegregation, now we have corporations like News Corp acting like progressives on sexual harassment." <http://bit.ly/2ApHIFu> ... **\$16.60 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2jFUjXY> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--"**Trapped: The Grenfell Tower Story,**" by Tom Lamont in GQ: "Buildings aren't supposed to burn the way London's Grenfell Tower did. But to the residents stuck inside, and to the firefighters who rushed to save them, this was a different kind of fire, a blaze that burned at 1,800 degrees, a devastating inferno that killed dozens and shocked an entire nation. This is the untold story of what it felt like to fight that fire and to flee it—a story of a thousand impossible decisions and the people who dared that night to make them." <http://bit.ly/2iB3X1I> (h/t Longform.org)

--"**Every Parent Wants to Protect Their Child. I Never Got the Chance,**" by Jen Gann in NYMag's The Cut: "In what's called a wrongful-birth case, plaintiffs sue a medical practitioner for the failure to diagnose or inform them of a disease or disability possible to detect in utero. The money awarded goes toward the cost - astronomically high - of the child's medical care. A mother desperate to help her child declares that she would not have had that child." <http://bit.ly/2zIfbZx>

--"**Europe's Heart of Darkness,**" by Alexander Clapp in 1843 Magazine: "A fledgling human-trafficking trade takes in refugees from the Aegean Sea, hustles them over to the Adriatic and on to Italy. Guns come by boat from Albania or Ukraine. Hash arrives from Crete, heroin from the Turkish border, cocaine in car parts imported from South America. The contraband cigarette business makes ???1bn of illegal profit in Greece alone." <http://bit.ly/2jCefL6>

--"**Lake Chad: The World's Most Complex Humanitarian Disaster,**" by Ben Taub in the New Yorker: "Boko Haram, climate change, predatory armies, and extreme hunger are converging on a marginalized population in Central Africa." <http://bit.ly/2n91NYe>

--**"The Case for Not Being Born,"** by Joshua Rothman in the New Yorker: "The anti-natalist philosopher David Benatar argues that it would be better if no one had children ever again." <http://bit.ly/2zJNwrf> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"The new great game in the Middle East,"** by John Jenkins in the New Statesman: "What we are seeing is the eruption of a previously submerged rivalry between an expansionist Iran and a historically cautious Saudi Arabia that has been years in the making. The rivalry flows from Lebanon through Syria and Iraq, across to Bahrain, Oman and Yemen and up the Red Sea. It also affects Pakistan and Afghanistan." <http://bit.ly/2Alaeoj>

--**"The secret tricks hidden inside restaurant menus,"** by Richard Gray on BBC: "Great thought and effort go into creating restaurant menus - and there are some very powerful psychological tricks employed to make you choose." <http://bbc.in/2mObDPb>

--**"How the sandwich consumed Britain,"** by Sam Knight in the Guardian: "The industry has its own 80:20 rule: 80% of sales come from 20% of the flavours. These are often referred to as 'the core' - the egg mayonnaise, the BLT, the chicken salad. Pret's best-selling sandwiches (the top three are all baguettes: chicken caesar and bacon, tuna and cucumber, cheddar and pickle) have not changed for seven years. [Marks and Spencer's] prawn mayo has been its No 1 for 36." <http://bit.ly/2mVUZNL>

--**"A Generation in Japan Faces a Lonely Death,"** by NYT's Norimitsu Onishi in Tokiwadaira, Japan - per Longreads.com's description: "With a population of 127 million, Japan has the most rapidly aging society on the planet. Elderly individuals often live in extreme isolation, albeit only a few feet from neighbors on all sides, 'trapped in a demographic crucible of increasing age and declining births.' Their fate? A 'lonely death' where their body may remain undiscovered in their small government apartment for days (or even years) because family is distant both physically and emotionally, and friends have all long since passed away." <http://nyti.ms/2zFhHvr>

TRY AGAIN -- "Milo Yiannopoulos' crusade fizzles in California, so he heads to Australia," by LA Times' Ben Oreskes: Cal State "Fullerton was supposed to be just one stop in what Yiannopoulos billed as a major national tour in which he would bring hard-right attitude to liberal campuses and other venues. But the tour has largely fizzled. Of the at least eight planned events nationally in October and November, Fullerton was the only one on a college campus that ended up happening. (He also spoke at a book signing with former Trump advisor Roger Stone in mid-October in Orlando, Fla.). A spokeswoman for the writer's company disputed these numbers but declined to offer more details about where else he may have spoken." <http://lat.ms/2zVBF9z>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Michelle Obama dining with two friends at Chez Billy Sud in Georgetown ... Reps. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.), Steve Stivers (R-Ohio), Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) and Richie Neal (D-Mass.) all at DCA midday on Friday ... Rep. Mark Sanford (R-S.C.) sitting on the floor of DCA Friday with no shoes on waiting for a flight to Charleston - *pic*
<http://bit.ly/2j7aAWw>

OUT AND ABOUT -- SPOTTED at a party and dinner at Café Milano last night hosted by UAE Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba, Bob Johnson and Franco Nuschese honoring Kennedy Center Honors recipient Lionel Richie: Colin Powell, Norman Lear, Quincy Jones, Bill Cohen and Janet Langhart, Ret. Gen. Jim Jones and Diane Jones, Catherine and Wayne Reynolds, Bob Woodward and Elsa Walsh, Tammy Haddad, Jonathan Karl, Tom Quinn, Roxanne Roberts, Bobby Kotick.

SPOTTED at a party last night in celebration of Kennedy Center honoree Norman Lear hosted by Amb. Elizabeth Frawley Bagley at her home in Georgetown: Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Paul Pelosi, Kennedy Center Chairman David Rubenstein and President Deborah Rutter, Leslie Moonves and Julie Chen, Norman and Lyn Lear, Lara Bergthold, David Bohnett, Ron Brownstein, Alex Witt, Andrea Mitchell, Judy Woodruff, Amb. Lou DeBaca and Lorena Chambers, Ambassador John Emerson and Kimberly Emerson, Harold Ickes, Michael Keegan, Frank Loy, Ricki Seidman and Aviva Rosenthal.

SPOTTED at the Saban Forum gala dinner last night at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel: John Allen on stage in conversation with Yonit Levi, Ehud Barak interviewed by Jeffrey Goldberg, Jeremy Ben-Ami, Justice Stephen Breyer, Leader Nancy Pelosi, Amb. Ron Dermer, former Sen. Joe Lieberman, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), Reps. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), and Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), Egyptian Amb. Yasser Reda, George Tenet, Martin Indyk, Haim Saban, Gabi Ashkenazi, Nir Barkat, Jackson Diehl, Amb. Dan Shapiro.

ANNIVERSARY: Autumn and Jim VandeHei celebrate 17 years of marriage today.

BIRTHDAYS: former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is 78 ... former Attorney General Edwin Meese III is 85 ... Stone Phillips is 63 ... Nancy Haberman is 7-0 (hat tip: daughter Maggie) ... Cal Thomas is 75 ... Ken Babby ... Politico's Alex Short ... Grant Everett Starrett ... RNC alum Bob Carey ... Rep. Carol Shea Porter (D-N.H.) is 65 ... former Rep. Pete Gallego (D-Tex.) is 56 ... Jason Huntsberry ... Emily Schultheis, writing for POLITICO Europe in Berlin as a 2017-18 Robert Bosch fellow ... Carrie Wofford, head of Veterans Education Success, former Senate staffer, and a Clinton WH alum, and Jen Wofford, Ford Foundation consultant and an SEIU and AFL-CIO alum, are 5-0. "The Wofford clan (including their uncle, former Sen. Harris Wofford (D-Pa.) are gathering for a family celebration Saturday" (h/t Lauren Culbertson) ... Kelly Klass of Locust Street Group (h/t Allison Schneider) ...

... **Marc La Vorgna**, founder of comms and public affairs firm MLV Strategies ... Mina Moore, director at Glover Park Group ... Megan McCafferty ... Caroline Gangware ...

Mark Irion, former president at Levick and senior counselor at Prosper Group ... Bush WH alum Eleanor Schiff ... Dan Puskar ... Mairead Lynn, Democratic press secretary for the Senate HELP committee ... Erin Bailey ... Sara Siskind ... Patricia Rojas-Ungar, VP of gov't relations at the U.S. Travel Association ... Andrew Howell, partner at Monument Policy Group ... Conyers Davis of the USC Schwarzenegger Institute ... Bush 41 alum Mark A. Shiffrin is 61 ... Audrey Lavin ... Celeste Brown ... Rayshon Payton.

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) ... Michael Mukasey. Panel: Charles Blow, Alex Castellanos, Megan Murphy, Jen Psaki and Chris Ruddy

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) ... Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie. Panel: Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., Doris Kearns Goodwin, Mike Murphy and Danielle Pletka

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: Mitch McConnell ... Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) ... Sen. Angus King (I-Maine) ... OMB Director Mick Mulvaney. Panel: Ron Brownstein, Ezra Klein, Julie Pace and Ramesh Ponnuru

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) ... Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.). Panel: Mike Rogers, Jennifer Granholm, Rick Santorum and Karine Jean-Pierre

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster ... Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.). Panel: adviser Karl Rove, Jennifer Griffin, Jason Chaffetz and Juan Williams ... panel Michele Flournoy and Gen. Jack Keane (Ret.) ... "Power Player of the Week" with former Secretary of State George Shultz (live from the Reagan National Defense Forum in Simi Valley, California)

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: Jeff Greenfield, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Michael D'Antonio ... Hadas Gold and Marisa Guthrie ... Sally Quinn

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) ... Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.) ... Bill Richardson. ... Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) ... Art Laffer. Panel: Caitlin Huey Burns and Al D'Amato

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: Mollie Hemingway ... Shelby Holliday ... Marie Harf ... Lynn Sherr ... Matthew Belloni ... Susan Ferrechio and Noah Rothman

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Julie Hirschfield Davis, Julie Pace, Sahil Kapur and Michael Warren

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Foreign policy panel: Ian Bremmer and Julia Ioffe ... T.R. Reid ... Thomas Erdbrink ... Max Boot

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: María Elena Durazo with two hotel employees and alleged victims of sexual harassment (Cecilia and Nuris) ... Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-Ill.) ... former Mexican foreign affairs secretary Jorge Castañeda ... journalist and Mexican presidential hopeful Pedro Ferriz de Con ... chef Cristina Martinez

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: Cloudflare co-founder and CEO Matthew Prince ... **"Newsmakers"**: Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), questioned by Military Times' Leo Shane and Bloomberg Government's Roxana Tiron ... **"Q&A"**: Author and Hoover Institution senior fellow John Cogan

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2mCW4tB>): Hispanic Leadership Fund president Mario H. Lopez.

***** **A message from PhRMA**: According to new analysis from the Moran Company, hospitals mark up medicine prices, on average, nearly 500 percent. The analysis of 20 medicines also found a hospital is paid 2.5 times what the biopharmaceutical company, who brought the medicine to market, receives. While hospital markups lead to higher costs for patients, employers and payers, these markups are often overlooked in conversations about medicine costs. As the provider market continues to become more concentrated and the number of medicines being administered in hospital-owned facilities is growing, the amount hospitals mark up medicine prices needs greater scrutiny. <http://onphr.ma/2Ba0TOa> *****

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2017

President Donald J. Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Personnel to Key Administration Posts

President Donald J. Trump today announced his intent to nominate the following individuals to key positions in his Administration:

Kelly Knight Craft of Kentucky to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada. Ms. Kelly Craft heads Kelly G. Knight LLC, a business advisory firm based in Lexington. She also currently serves on the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees. In 2007, Ms. Craft was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as a United States Delegate to the United Nations. Ms. Craft has served in key roles for major organizations, including on the board of directors of the Salvation Army and the Center for Rural Development, a nonprofit dedicated to economic progress in rural Kentucky. She is a co-founder of the Craft Academy for Science and Mathematics at Morehead State University. She earned a B.A. from the University of Kentucky.

Sharon Day of Florida to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Costa Rica. Ms. Sharon Day most recently served as co-chair of the Republican National Committee (RNC), having been first elected in January 2011 and reelected in 2013 and 2015. She has served the Republican Party at the local, state, and national level for more than twenty years, with

a focus on engaging and empowering women candidates and activists, as well as strengthening state parties and volunteerism. She is an active political columnist and commentator. Earlier in her career, she was the chief executive officer and vice president of Marketing of Stop Loss International, a general managing underwriter and reinsurance company, headquartered in Indianapolis. Ms. Day has also been active in community service, including as housing authority chair for the Broward County Housing Authority and as commissioner on the Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

###

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To: Kathryn Watson[kathryn.watson@cbsinteractive.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Sat 12/16/2017 5:47:30 PM
Subject: Re: Reaching out re NYT story + decision to hire Definers

“The Definers contract is for news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

Sent from my iPhone

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Good morning,

I wanted to reach out after the [NYT story published last night](#) described the EPA's decision to hire Definers to handle media work.

Specifically, I wanted to confirm the details of the contract — \$120,000 to handle media, which apparently was cheaper than the last deal?

But I also wanted to know if anyone at the EPA in any way directed Definers to look into EPA employees who might contradict the president's agenda?

Thank you, and my cell is [571-282-8391](tel:571-282-8391).

--

Kathryn (Katie) Watson
Politics Reporter, [CBS Digital](#)
Cell: 571.282.8391
Twitter: [@kathrynw5](#)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 12/4/2017 6:11:38 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by PhRMA: TRUMP backs ROY MOORE -- CORRINE BROWN sentenced to 5 years in prison -- WHITE HOUSE invites PELOSI and SCHUMER to meeting -- FREEDOM CAUCUS schedules emergency meeting

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

BREAKING -- THE WHITE HOUSE has invited **SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER** (D-N.Y.) and **HOUSE MINORITY LEADER NANCY PELOSI** (D-Calif.) to a meeting Thursday to discuss the "year-end agenda."

-- *Excerpt from their joint statement:* "We need to reach a budget agreement that equally boosts funds for our military and key priorities here at home including the opioid crisis, pension plans and rural infrastructure. We have to provide funding for community health centers and CHIP, as well as relief for the millions of Americans still reeling from natural disasters. And we must also come together on a bipartisan deal to pass the DREAM Act along with tough border security measures. There is a bipartisan path forward on all of these items."

GOVERNMENT FUNDING runs out on Friday.

WELCOME TO DECEMBER -- ATTN. PRESIDENT TRUMP -- THE HOUSE FREEDOM CAUCUS has scheduled an emergency meeting before the 6:30 p.m. vote series this evening. Many in the three-dozen member conservative caucus have voiced opposition to the leadership's strategy to fund the government for two weeks, and they have lingering tax concerns. And with a series of important votes coming up -- including the motion to begin formal Senate-House tax negotiations -- the HFC could have some leverage. If they stick together, they have the ability to single handedly block anything that comes to the floor.

-- **MEANWHILE ... BUSY WEEK AHEAD: @StewSays:** "This week the #Senate will confirm the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen to be Secretary of @DHSgov, pass a clean, two-week CR and go to conference with the House on the #TaxReform bill."

Good Monday afternoon. Can't get enough of our latest Playbook Power List: 18 to Watch in 2018? Jake, Anna and Zach recorded a bonus Audio Briefing discussing some of the honorees and how we picked the list. **Listen** <http://bit.ly/2BHOOrFO> ... **The list** <http://politi.co/2jLwZIs>

TRUMP BACKS MOORE -- WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT, via the pool at 12:40 p.m.: "The President had a positive call with Judge Roy Moore during which they discussed the state of the Alabama Senate race and the President endorsed Judge Moore's campaign," principal deputy press secretary Raj Shah said in a statement.

-- **@realDonaldTrump at 6:17 a. m.** : "Democrats refusal to give even one vote for massive Tax Cuts is why we need Republican Roy Moore to win in Alabama. We need his vote on stopping crime, illegal immigration, Border Wall, Military, Pro Life, V.A., Judges 2nd Amendment and more. No to Jones, a Pelosi/Schumer Puppet!" ... **at 7:00 a.m.**: "Putting Pelosi/Schumer Liberal Puppet Jones into office in Alabama would hurt our great Republican Agenda of low on taxes, tough on crime, strong on military and borders...& so much more. Look at your 401-k's since Election. Highest Stock Market EVER! Jobs are roaring back!"

-- **REMEMBER:** Ivanka said: "There's a special place in hell for people who prey on children. I've yet to see a valid explanation and I have no reason to doubt the victims' accounts."

-- **@MooreSenate at 12:37 p.m.**: "'Go get 'em, Roy!' - President Trump[.] Just got off the phone with President Trump who offered his full support and said he needs a fighter to help him in the US Senate. I look forward to fighting alongside the President to #MAGA!"

LEXINGTON HERALD LEADER -- "Jeff Hoover had sex with staffer and used donors to fund settlement, lawsuit alleges," by John Cheves: "The communications director for the Kentucky House Republican caucus sued the Legislative Research Commission on Monday, alleging that she is being unfairly punished for shedding light on sexual harassment claims by a female colleague who was in an 'inappropriate sexual relationship' with then-House Speaker Jeff Hoover of Jamestown.

"In her whistle-blower lawsuit, filed in Franklin Circuit Court, Daisy Olivo said she and a House aide who was in a relationship with Hoover both were targeted for punishment by Hoover's chief of staff, Ginger Wills. Wills and other House GOP staff members and lawmakers have shunned her in the weeks since the harassment scandal publicly broke and Hoover resigned as speaker, making it impossible for her to perform her duties, Olivo alleged.

"Olivo's suit contains several new or more specific allegations. She said her female colleague told her that the 'secret settlement' that resolved her harassment complaint against Hoover and three other Republican state representatives was constructed 'to avoid media scrutiny, and it was paid off the public record with private funds pooled from prominent campaign donors.'" <http://bit.ly/2BxGC4z>

FROM 30,000 FEET -- " Women Line Up to Run for Office, Harnessing Their Outrage at Trump," by NYT's Michael Tackett in Leesburg, Virginia: "For Wendy

Gooditis, a real estate agent in the Northern Virginia suburbs, the crystallizing moment came when she heard her state delegate suggest that he had fought gerrymandering in Virginia when his record said otherwise.

"For Mai-Khanh Tran, a pediatrician in Southern California, it was the day after the presidential election in 2016 and she looked into the eyes of a young patient with a brain tumor whose family had only recently obtained health insurance.

"For Andrea Ramsey, the president of a nonprofit children's health clinic in Kansas City, Kan., it was in May when her local congressman voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

None of the women had seriously contemplated running for public office before. They had no money or organization. But they were dismayed with the direction of the country, they said, starting with the election of President Trump, and finally decided to act. ...

"The largest increase by far is in the number of female House candidates -- 354 -- which includes 291 Democrats and 63 Republicans, according to data from the Rutgers center. The number of women challenging incumbents is almost four times the number at the same period in 2015. In the Senate, there are almost double the number of female candidates - 25 Democrats and 13 Republicans so far - than there were at this point in 2015, and about 10 times the number in the 2012 and 2014 elections."

<http://nyti.ms/2BH6wDO>

CORRINE BROWN SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON -- Florida Times-Union's Christopher Hong and Steve Patterson: "Former U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown was sentenced Monday to five years in federal prison for fraud and tax crimes that included raising about \$800,000 for a sham charity. Brown's longtime chief of staff, Ronnie Simmons, was sentenced to 48 months in prison, and the charity's founder, One Door for Education President Carla Wiley, was sentenced to 21 months.

"U.S. District Judge Timothy Corrigan said he believed Brown used her position in Congress to achieve an 'admirable record of service.' However, he also said she abused the trust of that office in order carry out a criminal conspiracy."

<http://bit.ly/2ALl3km>

HMM -- "Trump's lawyer claims responsibility for president's problematic tweet," by NBC News' Kristen Welker and Max Burman: "President Donald Trump's personal lawyer took responsibility Sunday for a tweet that Trump sent the previous day, in which the president said for the first time that he knew his former security adviser, Michael Flynn, had lied to the FBI before he fired Flynn in February. ...

"Interfering in the FBI's investigation could be construed as obstructing justice, potentially creating legal jeopardy for Trump. Within a few hours, Trump's personal lawyer, John Dowd, stepped in to say that he wrote the tweet, not the president. Dowd told NBC News that he drafted the tweet and then sent it to White House Social Media

Director Dan Scavino to publish. When asked for the original email he sent to Scavino, Dowd said he dictated it orally. 'I'm out of the tweeting business,' Dowd said with a chuckle. 'I did not mean to break news.'" <http://nbcnews.to/2AILYgJ>

***** **A message from PhRMA:** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more: <http://politi.co/2ngVIPj> *****

THE PRESIDENT WEIGHS IN on the charge against Mike Flynn, per pooler S.V. Date of HuffPost: "I feel badly for Gen. Flynn. I feel very badly. He's led a very strong life, and I feel very badly about it. I will say this. Hillary Clinton lied many times to the FBI and nothing happened to her. Flynn lied, and it destroyed his life, and I think it's a shame. Hillary Clinton on the 4th of July weekend went to the FBI, not under oath, it was the most incredible thing anyone has ever seen, lied many times, nothing happened to her. Flynn lied, and it's like -- it ruined his life. It's very unfair."

NEWS FROM RICHMOND -- RICHARD CULLEN is stepping down as chairman of McGuire Woods. The former Virginia attorney general is representing VP Mike Pence in the Mueller investigation. Jon Harmon will take his slot.

COREY LEWANDOWSKI BOOK EXCERPT -- "'I've Got a Crook Running My Campaign': Donald Trump, Paul Manafort and me" in POLITICO Magazine -- an excerpt from "Let Trump Be Trump," by Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie: <http://politi.co/2ijM03z>

TAX UPDATE -- "Rep. Kevin McCarthy Calls For Corporate AMT Repeal," by WSJ's Rich Rubin: "A top House leader says Republicans need to repeal the corporate alternative minimum tax and reverse a late Senate change that has companies up in arms. 'That has to be eliminated because that would destroy R&D,' House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said on CNBC on Monday. Retaining the 20% corporate AMT creates a parallel tax structure. Companies would have to pay whichever tax is higher, and the AMT denies the research and development tax credit. That's a particularly important break for California's high-tech industry." <http://on.wsj.com/2iNCVUL>

FALLOUT FROM NRCC VS. NRSC TIFF -- "NRSC staffers resign after digital break-in," by Kevin Robillard: "Two fundraising staffers for the [NRSC] who broke into the computer servers of the House GOP campaign arm resigned late last week, Republican sources told POLITICO. The staffers, Laura Kleffner and Krista Madaio, had previously worked at the [NRCC]. Three Republican sources said last week that the NRSC aides used their old NRCC passwords to collect information on more than 200,000 donors." <http://politi.co/2ANQBWC> ... **Last week's story** <http://politi.co/2AMi0Za>

WAR REPORT -- "Did American Missile Defense Fail in Saudi Arabia?," by NYT's

Max Fisher, Eric Schmitt, Audrey Carlsen and Malachy Browne: "The official story was clear: Saudi forces shot down a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebel group last month at Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh. It was a victory for the Saudis and for the United States, which supplied the Patriot missile defense system. ...

"But an analysis of photos and videos of the strike posted to social media suggests that story may be wrong. Instead, evidence analyzed by a research team of missile experts appears to show the missile's warhead flew unimpeded over Saudi defenses and nearly hit its target, Riyadh's airport. The warhead detonated so close to the domestic terminal that customers jumped out of their seats." <http://nyti.ms/2ANQsmp>

HAPPENING TOMORROW -- Don't miss POLITICO's fifth annual Women Rule Summit featuring informative and forward-looking conversations with Kellyanne Conway, Kate Bosworth, Sec. Elaine Chao, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Sen. Marco Rubio, Camille Hearst, and many more as they discuss how women are harnessing their power to make an impact. Sign up to watch the livestream and receive notifications_ (<http://bit.ly/wrlivestreamsignup>) and follow along on Twitter with #WomenRule.

THE TIME PERSON OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST: Jeff Bezos ... The Dreamers ... Patty Jenkins ... Kim Jong Un ... Colin Kaepernick ... The #MeToo movement ... Robert Mueller ... Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ... Donald Trump ... Xi Jinping <http://ti.me/2AMrF1R>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Steinle family repeatedly said they do not want their daughter's death used politically -- Primary challenger emerges to Gov. Rauner <http://politi.co/2jMh1gV>

MEDIAWATCH -- POSTCARD FROM ZACH AT THE POYNTER JOURNALISM ETHICS SUMMIT -- CNN's Jim Acosta: "This is a different kind of president, it is going to require a different kind of playbook." ... "We are not part of 'the Resistance' but ... if journalism is attacked, we should resist. That is up to us." ... **Bloomberg's Margaret Talev:** "One of the challenges that seems new to me ... is that it feels like, in some sense, the press corps, particularly people in the briefing room have ... among some American news consumers, it feels like we've become a proxy for all their frustrations." ...

... **The Weekly Standard's Stephen Hayes:** "Asserting accuracy is not going to work. You have to demonstrate accuracy and earn that respect." ... "Too often in discussions like this ... we don't spend enough time looking at why people -- particularly conservatives -- are so skeptical of the kind of accuracy and the kind of news reporting we provide." ...

... **WaPo's Marty Baron:** "We're not in the business of pandering to anybody, we're not in the business of placating anybody ... I think we have to know who we are, have a strong sense of self, purpose and mission, and do that everyday." ... "I think we should've seen Donald Trump coming, or someone like him coming, before he

descended the escalator."

WAPO'S BEN TERRIS: "Why does conservative Armstrong Williams want to buy the liberal Washington City Paper?": "Williams is a small man ... [who] speaks without a filter - something that made him a go-to for reporters for much of the 2016 campaign - which gives the impression that he always means what he says. Even if that's not always the case. He volunteers that he's 55, though public records suggest he is 58. 'Either one works,' Williams says graciously, noting that at various times in his life it has been convenient to appear older or younger than he actually is. (Carson once said of his close friend that he's 'not necessarily the epitome of truth . . . He doesn't speak all things that are correct.')" <http://wapo.st/2AVDzHj>

--"EPA Kicks Out InsideSources Reporter From Event With Administrator Scott Pruitt," by Ethan Stoetzer: <http://bit.ly/2jNGOFR>

-- POLITICO EUROPE announced a series of big moves on their leadership team. **Stephen Brown** will become managing editor, **Kate Day** will move to London to be the first U.K. editor and **Johannes Boege** will be the chief product officer.

-- ALEX THOMPSON has moved to D.C. and is now covering the Trump era as a staff writer for Vice News.

SPOTTED: Rep. Charlie Crist (D-Fla.) walking down Lexington Avenue this morning in NYC

HAPPENING TONIGHT - Author **James K. A. Smith** will speak on his new book "Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology" at a Trinity Forum event tonight at the National Press Club. **Michael Wear**, an Obama alum and former deputy director of the Faith Based Office, will give a response. **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2iN7euE> ... **\$15.17 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2ATNv3R>

--MICHAEL SMERCONISH is speaking tonight at 7 p.m. at Sixth & I in a talk titled "Divided We Stand." **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2iKBYMV>

TRANSITIONS -- Adi Sathi, former vice chairman of the Michigan GOP and legislative fellow in Sen. Orrin Hatch's (R-Utah) office, is joining the RNC as national director of Asian Pacific American engagement. ... **Natalie Boyse** has started as a special assistant in the office of the secretary at the Department of Education. She was most recently the deputy finance director at the MassGOP and is an alum of Rubio 2016, Poolhouse and Romney 2012. ...

... **Denis Forte** has joined the Century Foundation as a senior fellow focused on education policy. She was most recently the minority staff director for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. ... **Steve Jacobs** is joining Precision Strategies as managing principal on the digital team, **Hayley Matz Meadvin** is joining the firm's communications team as managing principal, and **Karly Moen** is joining the

digital team as senior associate. **Melanie Garunay** also recently joined the firm as a principal on the digital team, and **Brandon Chaderton** recently joined as Senior Associate on the operations team.

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://politi.co/2nqVIPj> *****

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 5/11/2017 8:06:32 PM
Subject: Please tweet from the EPA account

Need To Know Network: Pruitt Promises to Put States Back in the Driver's Seat on Regulations
<http://ntknetwork.com/pruitt-promises-to-put-states-back-in-the-drivers-seat-on-regulations/>

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To: Kathryn Watson[kathryn.watson@cbsinteractive.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
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Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services.

This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient.

If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.

Sent from my iPhone

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Kathryn (Katie) Watson
Politics Reporter, CBS Digital
Cell: 571.282.8391
Twitter: @kathrynw5

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From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 12/5/2017 11:40:39 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: BIG MCKAY COPPINS story on PENCE -- WORLD TO U.S.: Don't name Jerusalem the capital of Israel -- NYT: CONYERS retiring -- SCOOP: Joint House-Senate GOP retreat will be at the GREENBRIER at the end of Jan.

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

BIG NEWS FOR DEMS -- NYT'S YAMICHE ALCINDOR -- "Conyers Won't Seek Re-election in Wake of Harassment Claims, Relative Says": "Mr. Conyers, the longest-serving member of the House of Representatives, will make the announcement by calling into a local radio show on Tuesday morning, Ian Conyers, a Michigan state senator, said in a phone interview early Tuesday. Ian Conyers, 29, the grandson of Mr. Conyers's brother, said he now planned to run for the seat held by his 88-year-old great-uncle, a Democrat who represents the Detroit area. 'He is not resigning. He is going to retire,' the younger Mr. Conyers said. 'His doctor advised him that the rigor of another campaign would be too much for him just in terms of his health.'" <http://nyti.ms/2kmc8iN>

-- **THE DECISION** could ratchet down pressure in the Democratic Caucus. But remember: many Democrats have said Conyers should resign immediately.

Good Tuesday morning. NEWS -- The joint House-Senate Republican legislative retreat will be held at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia in January. The retreat -- organized by the Congressional Institute -- will be Jan. 31 through Feb. 2. President Donald Trump is expected to attend. The Greenbrier is more than four hours from Washington in the West Virginia mountains. House Republican Conference Chairman Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington State is expected to make this announcement today in a closed party meeting.

PAGING TRUMP AND JARED: THE WORLD COMES OUT AGAINST THE U.S. NAMING JERUSALEM ISRAEL'S CAPITAL -- AP at 4:23 a.m.: "ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey warns US that recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital is 'red line' for Muslims."

... **BARAK RAVID**, of Israel's Channel 10: If the U.S. declares Jerusalem the capital, it

"might lead to cutting of diplomatic relations between Turkey & Israel" ... "German FM Gabriel: U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel will be counterproductive & will only worsen the crisis. A solution to the issue of Jerusalem should be achieved through negotiations".

... **JOE DYKE**, AFP's Jerusalem bureau chief (@joedyke): "Breaking: US Jerusalem recognition would end Trump peace push, senior official Nabil Shaath announces. @AFP".

... **SAUDI ARABIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY**: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia views this step, if taken, to be in contradiction of the principle of not affecting final status negotiations, and contradicts international resolutions that emphasize the historical and firm rights of the Palestinian People regarding Jerusalem, which cannot be changed, nor can an attempt to impose a new reality upon it be made. This step, if taken, will constitute a fundamental change, and an unwarranted shift in the United States' impartial position, at a time when the world looks to the United States of America to work on achieving the desired progress in the peace process."

NYT's MARK LANDLER: French President Emmanuel "Macron, ... reaffirmed that the status of Jerusalem must be resolved through peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and particularly those relating to the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Jerusalem as their capital." <http://nyti.ms/2jQgZol>

-- **"State Department warns of violence ahead of Trump Jerusalem decision,"** by Nahal Toosi: "The State Department has warned American embassies worldwide to heighten security ahead of a possible announcement Wednesday by President Donald Trump that the U.S. recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The warning -- delivered in the past week via two classified cables described by State Department officials -- reflects concern that such an announcement could provoke fury in the Arab world even as Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner works to advance long-stalled peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

"Some Arab leaders have implored Trump not to change longstanding American policy on Jerusalem, saying it could make any peace agreement impossible and that it would spark mass protests and even terrorism. The militant group Hamas has already called for a new Palestinian 'intifada,' or uprising, if Trump declares Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish-majority state. 'The impending Jerusalem announcement has me very worried about the possibility of violent responses that could affect embassies,' one State Department official told POLITICO. 'I hope I'm wrong.'" <http://politi.co/2jNWPvi>

REUTERS' DAN WILLIAMS (@danwilliams): "Hearing that @netanyahu, asked during a closed-door meeting with Israeli parliamentarians yesterday what @realDonaldTrump would announce tomorrow regarding US policy on Jerusalem and the mooted embassy move, answered: 'I don't know.' No confirmation on that from @IsraeliPM aides."

TWEET OF THE MORNING -- AP'S JOSH LEDERMAN (@joshledermanAP): "The State Department is not missing a beat,' Secretary Tillerson says at US Embassy in Brussels, where there's no US ambassador to EU or Belgium".

JUST POSTED - MCKAY COPPINS in The Atlantic's Jan./Feb. issue, **"God's Plan for Mike Pence:** Will the vice president-and the religious right-be rewarded for their embrace of Donald Trump?": "On Friday, October 7, 2016, The Washington Post published the Access Hollywood tape ... It's been reported that Pence sent Trump a letter saying he needed time to decide whether he could stay with the campaign. But in fact, according to several Republicans familiar with the situation, he wasn't just thinking about dropping out-he was contemplating a coup. Within hours of *The Post*'s bombshell, Pence made it clear to the [RNC] that he was ready to take Trump's place as the party's nominee. Such a move just four weeks before Election Day would have been unprecedented-but the situation seemed dire enough to call for radical action. ...

"Meanwhile, a small group of billionaires was trying to put together money for a 'buyout'-even going so far as to ask a Trump associate how much money the candidate would require to walk away from the race. According to someone with knowledge of the talks, they were given an answer of \$800 million. (It's unclear whether Trump was aware of this discussion or whether the offer was actually made.) Republican donors and party leaders began buzzing about making Pence the nominee and drafting Condoleezza Rice as his running mate.

"Amid the chaos, Trump convened a meeting of his top advisers in his Manhattan penthouse. He went around the room and asked each person for his damage assessment. Priebus bluntly told Trump he could either drop out immediately or lose in a historic landslide. According to someone who was present, Priebus added that Pence and Rice were 'ready to step in.' ... The furtive plotting, several sources told me, was not just an act of political opportunism for Pence. He was genuinely shocked by the *Access Hollywood* tape. ... The couple was appalled by the video, however. Karen in particular was 'disgusted,' says a former campaign aide. 'She finds him reprehensible-just totally vile.'" <http://theatlantic.com/2nvmwWw>

STICKING UP FOR THE FBI -- "Director Defends F.B.I. After Trump Says Bureau Is in 'Tatters,'" by NYT's Adam Goldman and Charlie Savage: "In a message to the F.B.I.'s 35,000 agents and support staff that was provided to The New York Times, [Christopher] Wray said that he was 'inspired by example after example of professionalism and dedication to justice demonstrated around the bureau. It is truly an honor to represent you.' He did not mention Mr. Trump by name. ... Mr. Wray, who has run the F.B.I. for about four months, told his employees to ignore any criticism and to continue to uphold the Constitution. 'We find ourselves under the microscope each and every day - and rightfully so. We do hard work for a living,' he said, adding that the F.B.I. should 'continue to keep focused on our critical mission.' The email concluded with one of his favorite maxims: 'Keep calm and tackle hard.'" <http://nyti.ms/2kn0HYb>

NEBRASKA AVE READ -- AP/SAN DIEGO -- "Border arrests plunge, deportation

arrests soar," by Elliot Spagat: "The federal government, in the most complete statistical snapshot of immigration enforcement under President Donald Trump, says Border Patrol arrests plunged to a 45-year low while arrests by deportation officers soared.

"The Border Patrol made 310,531 arrests during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, a decline of 25 percent from 415,816 a year earlier and the lowest level since 1971. Despite the significant decline, arrests increased every month since May - largely families and unaccompanied children.

"Immigration and Customs Enforcement, whose officers pick up people for deportation away from the border, made 143,470 arrests, an increase of 25 percent from 114,434 a year earlier. After Trump took office, ICE arrests surged 40 percent from the same period a year earlier." <http://bit.ly/2inpze9>

DRAMA -- "House conservatives almost topple tax vote," by Bernie Becker, Sarah Ferris, and Colin Wilhelm: "House conservatives threatened to derail a key tax vote on Monday in an attempt to win more influence over the GOP's spending strategy, just four days before the deadline to fund the government. In a dramatic political stunt, more than a dozen members of the House Freedom Caucus withheld their support for a crucial procedural vote on the GOP's tax bill, threatening an embarrassing blow to GOP leadership.

"The conservatives eventually relented, approving what had been thought to be a formality - a motion to appoint negotiators to hammer out a final tax bill with the Senate. But the frenzy on the House floor underscored the divisions within the GOP over a spending strategy this month, and that the Republicans' march toward overhauling the tax code - which has proceeded with relatively little drama so far - could get caught up in the process.

"Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), the Freedom Caucus chairman, said after Monday's vote that he 'felt very good' about his conversation on the floor with Speaker Paul Ryan, who personally involved himself in the arm-twisting of conservatives. Meadows had earlier stepped outside the House chamber to take a phone call from President Donald Trump, but declined to give any details on the president's message." <http://politi.co/2iQOQ4a>

-- IF YOU'RE A BETTING MAN OR WOMAN, this isn't over. The Freedom Caucus wants to change the date of the government funding expiration. Right now, funding is set to expire Dec. 22, at which time Congress will punt the deadline again into 2018 to cobble together a large, yearlong spending bill. Meadows and the Freedom Caucus want a Dec. 30 or Dec. 31 expiration, because they think it gives them leverage. This does not seem likely to happen.

-- THIS IS A GOOD REMINDER: The Freedom Caucus, when it's unified, can control the outcome on the House floor.

TO REVIEW -- The government shuts down on Friday. Meadows -- the leader of a bloc of more than 30 conservatives -- says he does not like the GOP leadership plan. Democrats have no intent to help Republican leaders pass a stop gap measure. And the first serious talks between principals -- Democratic and Republican leaders and President Donald Trump -- is Thursday, the day before the funding deadline.

***** **A message from PhRMA** : A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

ON TAXES -- "Republicans Sought to Undercut an Unfavorable Analysis of the Tax Plan," by NYT's Jim Tankersley: "A Republican requirement that Congress consider the full cost of major legislation threatened to derail the party's \$1.5 trillion tax rewrite last week. So lawmakers went on the offensive to discredit the agency performing the analysis. In 2015, Republicans changed the budget rules in Congress so that official scorekeepers would be required to analyze the potential economic impact of major legislation when determining how it would affect federal revenues.

"But on Thursday, hours before they were set to vote on the largest tax cut Congress has considered in years, Senate Republicans opened an assault on that scorekeeper, the Joint Committee on Taxation, and its analysis, which showed the Senate plan would not, as lawmakers contended, pay for itself but would add \$1 trillion to the federal budget deficit. Public statements and messaging documents obtained by The New York Times show a concerted push by Republican lawmakers to discredit a nonpartisan agency they had long praised. ...

"The attack on the joint committee and its analysis is a change from the praise Republicans have long heaped on the body, which is staffed with economists and other career bureaucrats who analyze legislation in depth. 'The people who prepare our cost estimates are the best in the business, and they've been working on this issue for years,' Republicans on the House Budget Committee said on a page that was restored to the committee's website on Monday afternoon, after what staff members said was an accidental deletion during a site redesign this year." <http://nyti.ms/2zPH6mn>

-- "Companies Push to Repeal AMT After Senate's Last-Minute Move to Keep It Alive," by WSJ's Theo Francis and Rich Rubin: "Technology, banking and other industries mounted a new round of lobbying Monday to save a wide range of tax breaks following the last-minute switch in the federal tax overhaul by the U.S. Senate. The Senate on Saturday decided to keep a corporate alternative minimum tax, or AMT, a move that gave the senators \$40 billion over a decade to use on other priorities, according to the official estimate. The move blindsided CEOs and business groups, who acted quickly on Monday to try to persuade legislators to kill or modify the provision, arguing that keeping it would undercut several goals of the legislation, including

fostering investment in the U.S." <http://on.wsj.com/2BzJ1fe>

BIG WIN FOR TRUMP -- "Supreme Court allows full enforcement of Trump travel ban while legal challenges continue," by WaPo's Robert Barnes: "The Supreme Court on Monday granted President Trump's request to fully enforce his revised order banning travel to the United States by residents of six mostly Muslim countries while legal challenges to it proceed in lower courts. It was a victory for the White House, which has seen the courts trim back various iterations of the travel ban, and it bodes well for the administration if the Supreme Court is called upon to finally decide the merits of the president's actions." <http://wapo.st/2BAFZHI>

-- **"Justices take up dispute over wedding cake for gay couple,"** by AP's Mark Sherman: "The Supreme Court is taking up the highly anticipated case of the Colorado baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. Tuesday's clash at the high court pits baker Jack Phillips' First Amendment claims of artistic freedom against the anti-discrimination arguments of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, and two men Phillips turned away in 2012. The commission ruled that Phillips violated the state's anti-discrimination law when he refused to make a wedding cake for Charlie Craig and David Mullins." <http://bit.ly/2BLJcFh>

IMPORTANT READ -- "A congressman's accuser: Blackballed and babysitting for cash," by Rachael Bade: "North Carolina native Lauren Greene aspired to a career in politics when she arrived on Capitol Hill as an intern in 2009. She spent the next five years climbing the Capitol Hill ladder, ultimately becoming a communications director for a congressman in 2014. But Greene's budding career imploded, she said, the minute she accused Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-Texas) of sexually harassing her.

"Since the summer of 2014, when she says Farenthold fired her for raising concerns about a hostile work environment, Greene has been unable to land a full-time job. She's making \$15 an hour working temporary gigs for a homebuilder. She babysits on the side to earn extra cash. Her family has had to support her financially. And Greene, now 30, has left D.C., with no illusions that she will ever work in politics again.

"'It's definitely turned my life upside down,' Greene said in her first interview since she made the accusations against Farenthold. 'It's been a tough road. Emotionally, it was tough. Professionally, it's been hard to figure out next steps. And it's definitely had an impact on my career.' She later added: 'I was told right away that I would be, quote-unquote, 'blackballed' if I came forward. ... That's exactly what happened.'" <http://politi.co/2jfRNby>

-- **"Woman says Rep. Conyers groped her while they were in church,"** by AP's Corey Williams in Detroit: "A woman who says she worked for U.S. Rep. John Conyers for more than a decade says he slid his hand up her skirt and rubbed her thighs while she was sitting next to him in the front row of a church. Elisa Grubbs made the allegation in an affidavit released late Monday by her attorney, Lisa Bloom.

"Grubbs is the cousin of another accuser, Marion Brown, who reached a confidential settlement with Conyers over sexual harassment allegations but broke a confidentiality agreement to speak publicly last week. Bloom posted Grubbs' affidavit on Twitter and confirmed to The Associated Press that it was genuine."

<http://bit.ly/2AtSoQp>

-- "Woman shares new evidence of relationship with Roy Moore when she was 17," by WaPo's Stephanie McCrummen in Delray Beach, Florida: "Debbie Wesson Gibson was in her attic hauling out boxes of Christmas decorations last week when she noticed a storage bin she said she had forgotten about. Inside was a scrapbook from her senior year of high school, and taped to a page titled 'Those Who Inspire' was a graduation card. 'Happy graduation Debbie,' it read in slanted cursive handwriting. 'I wanted to give you this card myself. I know that you'll be a success in anything you do. Roy.' ... Gibson, who said that she publicly dated Moore when she was 17 and he was 34, a relationship she said she 'wore like a badge of honor' until she began reevaluating it in light of the accounts of other women, and now, Moore's own denials."

<http://wapo.st/2koiJJj>

--"RNC to support Roy Moore in Senate race in Alabama, weeks after cutting ties with his campaign," by WaPo's Sean Sullivan, Michael Scherer and David Weigel: "President Trump led an aggressive charge Monday on behalf of embattled Senate nominee Roy Moore, with the [RNC] rejoining Moore's side in Alabama weeks after cutting ties with him following allegations of sexual misconduct. ... By day's end, the RNC was back in his corner and America First Action, a pro-Trump group, said it would spend \$1.1 million to try to push Moore across the finish line. Senate Republican leaders, however, remained critical of Moore, warning that the former judge is likely to face an immediate ethics probe if he is elected next week." <http://wapo.st/2ilHzoU>

THE RUSSIA REPORT -- "McFarland Contradicted Herself on Russia Contacts, Congressional Testimony Shows," by NYT's Mike Schmidt and Sharon LaFraniere: "An email sent during the transition by President Trump's former deputy national security adviser, K.T. McFarland, appears to contradict the testimony she gave to Congress over the summer about contacts between the Russian ambassador and Mr. Trump's former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn. Ms. McFarland had told lawmakers that she did not discuss or know anything about interactions between Sergey I. Kislyak, who had been Moscow's ambassador to the United States, and Mr. Flynn, according to Senate documents.

"But emails obtained by The New York Times appear to undermine those statements. In a Dec. 29 message about newly imposed Obama administration sanctions against Russia for its election interference, Ms. McFarland, then serving on Mr. Trump's transition team, told another transition official that Mr. Flynn would be talking to the Russian ambassador that evening." <http://nyti.ms/2Ayud11>

--"Prosecutors: Manafort tried to write op-ed with Russian operative while under house arrest," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Paul Manafort and a long-time Russia-based

colleague with ties to Russian intelligence were caught last week ghost-writing an op-ed about his work in Ukraine, federal prosecutors working for special Russia counsel Robert Mueller said in a Monday court filing. Mueller's office argued that by working on the article, which was never published, Manafort violated a gag order imposed on his case. ... Prosecutors said the unauthorized move was a breach of trust that leads them to oppose an \$11 million bail agreement that it had previously reached with Manafort." <http://politi.co/2koY8ox>

BLOOMBERG -- "Mueller Subpoenas Trump Deutsche Bank Records," by Steven Arons: "Special prosecutor Robert Mueller zeroed in on President Donald Trump's business dealings with Deutsche Bank AG as his investigation into alleged Russian meddling in U.S. elections widens.

"Mueller issued a subpoena to Germany's largest lender several weeks ago, forcing the bank to submit documents on its relationship with Trump and his family, according to a person briefed on the matter, who asked not to be identified because the action has not been announced." <https://bloom.bg/2AU4vqB>

GOVERNMENT TAKING GUNS -- "Feds issue 4,000 orders to seize guns from people who failed background checks," by USA Today's Kevin Johnson: "Federal authorities sought to take back guns from thousands of people the background check system should have blocked from buying weapons because they had criminal records, mental health issues or other problems that would disqualify them. ... It's the largest number of such retrieval requests in 10 years, according to FBI records- an especially striking statistic after revelations that a breakdown in the background check system allowed a troubled Air Force veteran to buy a rifle later used to kill 26 worshipers at a Texas church last month." <https://usat.ly/2BAwzvww>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- President Trump is having lunch with Republican senators. This afternoon he will talk with American business owners and their families. Tonight he and First Lady Melania Trump will host the Congressional Ball.

THE JUICE ...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: BEN HOWARD**, part of the White House leg affairs team, is coming back to the Capitol to work as House Majority Whip Steve Scalise's (R-La.) floor director. Howard was previously House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's (R-Calif.) floor director. He starts in January. "Ben Howard has years of experience working in the House, Members trust him, and I am honored to welcome him to the Whip Team," Scalise said in a statement. "We have a lot of important work to do next year as we continue delivering on President Trump's agenda to create jobs and get our economy back on track, and Ben's unique experience in working both in the House and the administration will make him a strong asset to our team as we work to achieve significant legislative victories for the American people."

-- **NYT'S JEREMY PETERS** has sold a Trump-related book to Penguin Random

House's Crown imprint for a "high six-figure sum following an auction among rival publishers," per Vanity Fair's Joe Pompeo. The book is titled "Insurgency: The Inside Story of the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party," and is set for publication in 2019. <http://bit.ly/2iQdbXO>

WATCH LIVE at 8 A.M. - WOMEN RULE: 5TH ANNUAL SUMMIT - POLITICO hosts a full day of live conversations with female leaders as we ask: who are the new women shaping our future-and what are their agendas? Where can women find common ground at a time of division? How are women taking their place at the table in the public and private sectors-and what difference can they make there? Featured speakers include: actress Kate Bosworth, 'Me Too' movement founder Tarana Burke, Transportation Sec. Elaine Chao, Kellyanne Conway, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and more. **Learn more** <http://politi.co/2Bzkreu> ... **Livestream** <http://politi.co/2jfMvMW>

-- **SPOTTED** at the Women Rule VIP Happy Hour last night at the Four Seasons: Tarana Burke, Dr. Susan Blumenthal, Mistique Cano, Niki Christoff, Ambassador Vloria Citaku, Tasha Cole, Rebecca Cooper, Laurie Fabiano, Nancy Cook, Virginia Conye, Stephanie Cutter, Wade Davis, Carolyn DeWitt, Gloria Dittus, Heather Podesta, Amy Brandwein, Kristen Gentile, Julie Drews, Beth Helle, Jason Gold, Lucy Gettman, Maureen Griffin, Meredith Kelly, Jean Medina, Erin Loos Cutraro, Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, Trish Peva, Becky Tallent, Stephanie Schriock, Susannah Wellford and Scarlettte Whyte.

YOU'RE INVITED -- Our first live podcast taping is this Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Sixth and I. Our inaugural guests: **MICHAEL BARBARO**, host of the New York Times' hit podcast "The Daily," **DCCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAN SENA** and **NRCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN ROGERS**. And a panel of **POLITICO** stars: **RACHAEL BADE**, **SEUNG MIN KIM** and **ANNIE KARNI**. Get your tickets now! <http://bit.ly/2hWK7tF>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump pushes a shopping cart as he tours the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' food distribution center at LDS Welfare Square in Salt Lake City on Dec 4. | Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

ALI WATKINS -- "Elite terrorist interrogation team withers under Trump":
<http://politi.co/2iQksqF>

ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA -- "Microwave weapon could fry North Korean missile controls, say experts," by NBC News' Cynthia McFadden, William Arkin, Kevin Monahan and Kenzi Abou-Sabe: "The U.S. has microwave weapons that

proponents believe could stop North Korea from launching missiles by frying their electronics. The weapons were discussed at an August White House meeting related to North Korea, according to two U.S. officials with direct knowledge. The microwave weapons, known as CHAMPs, are fitted into an air-launched cruise missile and delivered from B-52 bombers. With a range of 700 miles, they can fly into enemy airspace at low altitude and emit sharp pulses of microwave energy to disable electronic systems." <http://nbcnews.to/2AP4DaP>

ISAAC DOVERE talks with **DAVID BOSSIE** and **COREY LEWANDOWSKI** in the latest "Off Message podcast: **"Trump's Threat to Take Down the GOP Still Stands"**: "His threat to take down the GOP if it resists, Bossie and Lewandowski told me in an interview for POLITICO's Off Message podcast, still stands. They wouldn't answer if they think the president will stay a member of the Republican Party, let alone committed to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan.

"The furthest Lewandowski would go: 'I think the president very much respects the Republican Party. He is very engaged with the Republican National Committee and helps them raise a lot of money and understands that having Republicans controlling Congress is a fundamentally different thing than having Democrats.' 'When you are fighting the establishment -- not just the Democrats, but there are some within the party and the deep state,' Bossie said, 'you're going to fight all of that and you're going to get some people, even in your own party, who don't like what you're doing.'"

<http://politi.co/2AtGfKW>

TOP OP-ED: "Bill Clinton: Americans Must Decide Who We Really Are":

<http://nyti.ms/2A50sYJ>

-- **"Democrats question GOP commitment to Senate's Russia inquiry,"** by Elana Schor: "Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee are raising fresh concerns about the GOP-led panel's appetite for digging into the Russian ties forged by multiple advisers to President Donald Trump. Friction on the committee last spiked in October, when the chairman, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), sent a slew of letters to key figures in the Russia investigation without the signature of Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the panel's top Democrat.

"Feinstein has followed by sending four rounds of letters without Grassley's signature that seek material from other players in the Trump campaign's communications with Russian officials - the most recent series of letters coming on Monday. 'Asked about Grassley's decision to not sign on, Feinstein told reporters late Monday that 'I think there's an effort, subtle, not to go deeply.' 'And I hadn't realized it before, but I realize it now,' she continued. "And we're going to have to find a way to deal with it." <http://politi.co/2AyyyBI>

***** **A message from PhRMA:** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers,

pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

HAPPENING TODAY -- "Cordray chooses hometown diner to announce run for governor," by Columbus Dispatch's Marty Schladen: "Life is coming full-circle for Richard Cordray, as the Grove City native returns to a diner in the heart of his home town Tuesday to launch his campaign for the top job in Ohio. Cordray will make his gubernatorial candidacy announcement at Lilly's Kitchen Table in Grove City, marking the start of a 'kitchen table' tour of the state." <http://bit.ly/2ASSDFc>

BUSINESS BURST -- "How Dollar General Became Rural America's Store of Choice," by WSJ's Sarah Nassauer: "While many large retailers are closing locations, Dollar General executives said they planned to build thousands more stores, mostly in small communities that have otherwise shown few signs of the U.S. economic recovery. The more the rural U.S. struggles, company officials said, the more places Dollar General has found to prosper. 'The economy is continuing to create more of our core customer,' Chief Executive Todd Vasos said in an interview ... 'We are putting stores today [in areas] that perhaps five years ago were just on the cusp of probably not being our demographic,' he said, 'and it has now turned to being our demographic.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2il1Wmk>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Bill O'Reilly Is Sued by Woman Who Settled Over Harassment Accusations," by NYT's Emily Steel: "A woman who reached a settlement with Bill O'Reilly over harassment allegations sued Mr. O'Reilly and Fox News on Monday for defamation and breach of contract, saying that public statements he and the network made violated the settlement and portrayed her as a liar and politically motivated extortionist. The woman, Rachel Witlieb Bernstein, is one of six known to have reached settlements after making accusations against Mr. O'Reilly. (Her allegations did not include sexual harassment.) ...

"Mr. O'Reilly has repeatedly said that the harassment allegations that led to his ouster from Fox News in April have no merit, that he never mistreated anyone and that he resolved the matters privately to protect his children. 'In fact, Mr. O'Reilly is the liar,' states the lawsuit, which was filed in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. 'He mistreated Ms. Bernstein. She was forced out of her job at Fox News and paid a settlement because of his mistreatment.'" <http://nyti.ms/2ArOdnV>

--WHITE HOUSE GAGGLE KERFUFFLE -- per Brian Stelter's Reliable Sources newsletter: "President Trump flew to Utah on Monday, so there was no W.H. press briefing. Reporters thought there would be a 'gaggle' aboard Air Force One, but White House Deputy Press Secretary Hogan Gidley told the press pool that he would not answer any Q's on the record, which obviously defeats the purpose of a Q&A. Gidley made statements on several topics, including Jerusalem and Moore, but then told the press pool he would not answer any questions on the record.

"An excerpt from the haggling that ensued: Q: 'We have to ask the questions--' A: 'I

understand that, you have a job to do and so do I.' Q: 'You're not doing your job. Your job is literally to take questions from us. That's the whole point of this.' If you don't want to do that, 'you can release paper statements if you want.' A: 'Please tell me more about my job if I get to tell you more about yours...' Once it was clear that Gidley wouldn't field ANY Q's on the record, the press pool scrapped it."

--"**ABC News president excoriates staff over Brian Ross' Michael Flynn error,**" by CNN's Oliver Darcy and Brian Stelter: "ABC News president James Goldston ... [also] announced that Ross, the network's chief investigative reporter, will no longer cover stories related to President Trump. ... 'I don't think ever in my career have I felt more rage and disappointment and frustration that I felt through this weekend and through the last half of Friday,' Goldston said [in ABC News' morning editorial call]. 'I don't even know how many times we've talked about this, how many times we have talked about the need to get it right,' he added. 'That how we have to be right and not first. About how in this particular moment, with the stakes as high as these stakes are right now, we cannot afford to get it wrong.'" <http://cnnmon.ie/2AP4Xq3>

--"**PBS names CNN's Christiane Amanpour as Charlie Rose's interim replacement,**" by Brent D. Griffiths: "CNN International will continue to air Amanpour's shows on weekdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. EST. 'Amanpour on PBS' [began] airing on New York's PBS station on Monday and will roll out to other stations beginning Dec. 11." <http://politi.co/2AqjCr3>

ABOUT LAST NIGHT -- Oliver Darcy in CNN's Reliable Sources newsletter: "Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie's book is out on Tuesday... So the pair threw a book party Monday night at Del Frisco's in Midtown Manhattan. ... When Steve Bannon strolled in, he shouted 'fake news,' gave me a hug, and joked I probably found out about the event via a Breitbart Slack leak which he vowed to close. Bannon also said Matt Drudge 'is my homie,' calling the conservative news heavyweight 'the king,' despite the barbs Drudge has thrown his direction."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell last night at Kinship

OUT AND ABOUT IN NYC - Pool report: "Last night, Mike Bloomberg hosted a gala dinner at Manhattan's Gotham Hall to fete the inaugural 'Bloomberg 50,' a new, annual list published by Bloomberg Businessweek that honors 50 icons and innovators who have changed the global business landscape in measurable ways. The event was emceed by Emmy and Peabody award-winner Keegan-Michael Key (who attended with his fiancé Elisa Pugliese), featured a special performance by recording artist, Broadway veteran and 'Hamilton' star Mandy Gonzalez." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2zOPzpM> ... **The list** <https://bloom.bg/2AsjJCj>

SOME OF WHAT BLOOMBERG SAID: "Now, I know what you're all thinking: Why isn't Mike Bloomberg on the list?! Good question. I was wondering that myself. But I was told it would be seen as self-promotion -- and as we all know, the American people will not stand for a business executive who promotes himself at every turn. I'm glad to say that the Bloomberg 50 is already being copied by other media outlets. Time Magazine just announced that the Time 100 will be split in half -- with two separate issues. The Koch brothers couldn't agree on a list."

SPOTTED: Adam Silver, Jeffrey Bewkes, Agnes Gund, Georgette Mosbacher, Eric Schmidt, Jon Batiste, Mark Morris, Hilary Rosen, Tammy Haddad, Jordan Klepper, Ken Burns, Martha Stewart, Jane Seymour, Hannah Bronfman, John Overdeck and David Siegel, Coco Rocha, Paulina Porizkova, Tamron Hall, and Ty Hunter, Megan Murphy, John Micklethwait, Marty Schenker, Justin Smith, and Jason Schechter.

SPOTTED at Heritage Foundation's media Christmas party last night at the Metropolitan Club: Ed Feulner, Mike Needham, Craig Gordon, Alyssa Farah, Brad Rateike, Paul Teller, Kelly Sadler, Russ Vought, Jess Bravin, Francesca Chambers, Chris Stirewalt, David Smith, Robert Schlesinger, Alex Pfeiffer.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Sarah Paulos of Flanagan Fulkerson & Company (hat tip: Heather Purcell)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Treasury chief of staff **Eli Miller** is 35. **A fun fact about Eli:** "I have constructed an impressive collection of USSS challenge coins over years of traveling. I have close to 100! My favorite is the USSS Special Agent Rescue Swimmer Coin. It's very rare and a difficult trade." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:**
<http://politi.co/2AWJBY1>

BIRTHDAYS: NYT media correspondent Mike Grynbaum (h/t Rachel Adler) ... Jamie Rhoades (hubby tip: Matt) ... photographer Paul Morse ... University of Tennessee-Knoxville's Stuart N. Brotman (h/t son Gabe) ... Evan Burfield, co-founder of startup incubator 1776 and CEO of UNION, is 41 (h/t Peter Cherukuri) ... Andrew Williams, VP of media relations at Goldman Sachs ... WaPo's Rachel van Dongen ... Roy Schwartz, co-founder and president of Axios, is 42 ... Moira Mack Muntz ... Politico Europe's Stephen Brown ... Jamie Estrada ... Politico's Khorri Atkinson ... Rep. French Hill (R-Ark.) is 61 ... NewsHour's Jeffrey Brown is 61 ... WRC NBC4 anchor Chris Lawrence ... Alex Simon ... Adam Casella, senior associate at Owl Rock Capital ... Katie Krieg ... Gray Johnson of the Atlantic Council ... Yana Mayayeva ... Jeremy Thompson ... Brai Odion-Esene ... Zoey Davidson ...

... **Lisa Spies** ... DJ Eckert ... Ashley Selden (h/ts Blake Waggoner) ... Ruiyong Chen, a principal on the paid media team at Precision Strategies (h/t Tom Zigo) ... Simon Jerome of the International Republican Institute ... Adam Rosenberg ... former Rep. Rodney Alexander (R-LA) is 71 ... Mike Platt, assistant Commerce secretary ... Chad Krilow ... Bush DHS alum Caroline Dierker Poe ... Anne Trenolone ... Porter McNeil ... Zach Drennen, communications manager for Climate Advisers ... Susan Scott Neal ...

Alex Traub ... Nicole Drummond, deputy digital director at Strategic Partners & Media ... Angelo Turner ... Mike O'Toole ... Anthony Bedell, deputy assistant secretary at DOT, is 5-0 ... Arthur Colby, MBA candidate at UChicago ... Calvin Trillin is 82 ... Kim Perkins ... Chuck Chvala (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from PhRMA:** In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

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Will handle.

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 12/6/2017 11:33:39 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: WILDFIRES RAVAGE California -- POPE urges Trump to keep status quo in Israel, as REX gets a chilly reception in Europe -- THREE DAYS UNTIL GOV'T SHUTDOWN -- Holes in Trump's political operation -- B'DAY: Don Nickles

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

JUST POSTED -- AP'S JOSH LEDERMAN: "Doctors identify brain abnormalities in Cuba attack patients": "Doctors treating the U.S. Embassy victims of mysterious, invisible attacks in Cuba have discovered brain abnormalities as they search for clues to explain the hearing, vision, balance and memory damage, The Associated Press has learned.

"It's the most specific finding to date about physical damage, showing that whatever it was that harmed the Americans, it led to perceptible changes in their brains. The finding is also one of several factors fueling growing skepticism that some kind of sonic weapon was involved." <http://bit.ly/2Ay35S2>

Good Wednesday morning. REMEMBER: The government shuts down Friday. Neither chamber of Congress will have a government funding bill on the floor today -- the House delayed its funding vote until Thursday. Congressional leaders go to the White House tomorrow. Rep. Al Green, Democrat from Texas, says he will force a vote on impeaching **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** today. Watch that vote. It could be a tough one for some Democrats. House Republicans are expected to be united in opposition.

-- **STEVEN SHEPARD**, with the latest POLITICO/Morning Consult poll: "Sixty-three percent say members of Congress should avoid a shutdown at all costs. Only 18 percent of voters surveyed say members should allow a temporary government shutdown if it helps them achieve their policy goals. The remaining 19 percent of voters are undecided." <http://politi.co/2knFs8r>

IN CALIFORNIA -- "Ventura County wildfire rages over 50,000 acres, reaches

Pacific Ocean as it jumps 101 Freeway," by L.A. Times' Ruben Vives, Laura Nelson, Sarah Parvini, Matt Hamilton and Sonali Kohli: "The destructive Thomas fire finally met a fire line it could not jump: the Pacific Ocean. The fast-moving, wind-driven wildfire continued to rage through the city of Ventura on Tuesday evening, jumping Highway 33 and burning through oil fields before crossing the 101 Freeway into Solimar Beach, authorities said.

"The blaze has consumed 50,500 acres on its journey to the ocean. The 101 remains open, but authorities warned drivers to be cautious traveling through the area. Thousands of homes were still threatened by flames, 27,000 people were forced to flee, a firefighter was injured and Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency, as some 1,100 personnel continued to battle the blaze." <http://bit.ly/2BKEOWS>

HAPPENING TODAY -- "Trump to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital," by Nahal Toosi and Andrew Restuccia: "President Donald Trump will announce Wednesday that the United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and will eventually relocate its embassy there - a declaration that could spur violent protests in the Middle East and undermine the White House's effort to strike a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

"Trump is making the announcement despite criticism from numerous U.S. allies, including France, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which have urged him to avoid the extremely sensitive topic. The president is still open to the possibility of a two-state solution, and he understands that the final borders of Israel and a future Palestinian state remain subject to negotiations, senior administration officials told reporters Tuesday. Trump will also not declare that Jerusalem must be the 'undivided' capital of Israel, an official told POLITICO." <http://politi.co/2jW1FGJ>

-- **SPOTTED** at the Israeli Embassy Hanukkah party last night: Jason Greenblatt, Trump's Middle East negotiator.

-- **NYT'S GARDINER HARRIS in BRUSSELS:** "Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson's reception in Brussels was distinctly chilly, as disappointment among European diplomats in President Trump's nationalistic tone and insulting messages on Twitter built into quiet fury on the eve of an expected announcement that the United States would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Such a move could infuriate the Palestinians, who want East Jerusalem to be their capital in a future Palestinian state. ... 'We believe that any action that would undermine these efforts must absolutely be avoided,' said Federica Mogherini, the European Union's top diplomat. 'A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as a future capital of both states.' ...

"Mr. Tillerson's spokesman, R.C. Hammond, acknowledged the less-than-warm reception. 'Allies have been very frank today in sharing some of their views,' Mr. Hammond said." <http://nyti.ms/2AAcbM1>

DISSENT -- "VATICAN CITY (AP) - Pope Francis urges status quo for Jerusalem, calls for 'wisdom and prudence' to avoid further conflict." ... **BARAK RAVID (@BarakRavid)**: "Chinese foreign ministry: We are concerned by Trump's intention to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This decision might lead to an escalation" ... "French president Macron called Jordan King Abdullah to discuss Trump's upcoming speech on Jerusalem. The king told Macron Trump's will have dangerous consequences of security and stability in the region".

-- **GLOBE AND MAIL's** Michelle Zilio in Ottawa: "A government official told The Globe and Mail on Tuesday that Canada will keep its embassy in Tel Aviv. The official also said Canada still does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital city, despite reports Mr. Trump will declare the U.S. does during a speech on Wednesday."

<https://tgam.ca/2is7tHJ>

-- **U.S. AND PHILIPPINES ON THE SAME PAGE: @DanWilliams**: "Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte tells Israel he's interested in moving his country's embassy to Jerusalem - @ReshetBet".

-- **REUTERS: "Palestinian envoy says U.S. recognition of Jerusalem is 'declaring war'"**: "'If he says what he is intending to say about Jerusalem being the capital of Israel, it means a kiss of death to the two state solution,' Manuel Hassassian said in a BBC radio interview. 'He is declaring war in the Middle East, he is declaring war against 1.5 billion Muslims (and) hundreds of millions of Christians that are not going to accept the holy shrines to be totally under the hegemony of Israel' Hassassian added."

<http://reut.rs/2B4tZBY>

-- **@KhaledAbuToameh**: "HAMAS declares Friday a DAY OF RAGE to protest Trump's intention to move US embassy to Jerusalem and calls for confrontations with Israel after Friday prayers."

SHOT -- @joshledermanAP: "Here in Brussels, British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson just called on Trump administration to offer a Mideast peace plan quickly following Trump's #Jerusalem move".

CHASER -- Senior Trump administration official: "The President will reiterate how committed he is to peace. While we understand how some parties might react, we are still working on our plan which is not yet ready. We have time to get it right and see how people feel after this news is processed over the next period of time."

SHELDON ADELSON'S PAPER -- ISRAEL HAYOM FRONT PAGE: "The eyes are on Jerusalem" -- *Front page, with photo of Trump at the Wailing Wall*

<http://bit.ly/2iYPwAZ>

TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY -- An 11:30 a.m. cabinet meeting, followed by a 1 p.m. statement on Jerusalem.

AROUND THE TAX HORN ... "'Holy crap': Experts find tax plan riddled with glitches," by Brian Faler: "Republicans' tax-rewrite plans are riddled with bugs, loopholes and other potential problems that could plague lawmakers long after their legislation is signed into law. Some of the provisions could be easily gamed, tax lawyers say. Their plans to cut taxes on 'pass-through' businesses in particular could open broad avenues for tax avoidance.

"Others would have unintended results, like a last-minute decision by the Senate to keep the alternative minimum tax, which was designed to make sure wealthy people and corporations don't escape taxes altogether. For many businesses, that would nullify the value of a hugely popular break for research and development expenses. Some provisions are so vaguely written they leave experts scratching their heads, like a proposal to begin taxing the investment earnings of rich private universities' endowments." <http://politi.co/2Ax1ax1>

-- **"Trump pressuring congressional Republicans to speed up on tax reform,"** by Nancy Cook and Aaron Lorenzo: "'We want it to proceed as quickly as possible, and we've communicated that to the Hill in a lot of ways,' said Marc Short, White House director of legislative affairs. 'There are not a lot of outstanding issues remaining, and we're not looking to open up Pandora's box.'" <http://politi.co/2AcMsw7>

THE HOUSE AND SENATE TAX BILLS handle nearly every single issue in a different way. There actually are a lot of outstanding issues remaining. The issues appear to be solvable, according to sources involved in the talks.

-- **"California Republicans Push to Preserve Income-Tax Deduction,"** by WSJ's Rich Rubin and Siobhan Hughes: "Though the House and Senate have voted to repeal the deduction for state income taxes in Republican tax overhaul plans, it isn't dead yet. California Republicans are pushing for an income-tax deduction in the final tax bill being worked out by lawmakers in a House-Senate conference committee on tax legislation. ... California Republicans would like the \$10,000 cap to be higher. And they want at a minimum to let taxpayers deduct \$10,000 against either property or income taxes, said Rep. Mimi Walters (R-Calif.)." <http://on.wsj.com/2k15F9g>

-- **"Tax Plan Crowns a Big Winner: Trump's Industry,"** by NYT's Patricia Cohen and Jesse Drucker: <http://nyti.ms/2AyTo3r>

***** **A message from PhRMA** : A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

UP NEXT! ... -- "After Push on Taxes, Republicans Line Up Welfare Revamp Next: Trump and GOP lawmakers ready to kick off fight to overhaul social programs," by WSJ's Louise Radnofsky: "The president didn't offer specifics about which of the dozens

of welfare programs he was seeking to change, or how. But congressional Republicans who have been pushing him for months to pursue the issue have proposed layering tougher work requirements on beneficiaries of programs such as food stamps, which are used by around 43 million Americans, and the cash benefit known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which is received by around 3.5 million people. ...

"A spokesman for Mr. Ryan said the goals for 2018 would be set at a conference retreat in January. But Mr. Jordan, a head of the conservative House Freedom Caucus who often has the ear of the president, has argued in recent weeks that the issue is one of the most winning ones with Mr. Trump's voters and should take center stage next year." <http://on.wsj.com/2nxdMzn>

-- **"Food stamp changes may usher in welfare reform push,"** by Helena Bottemiller Evich: "USDA signaled on Tuesday plans to give states greater flexibility over how they administer food stamps, potentially opening the door to stricter work requirements or drug testing on recipients. The announcement comes as Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker announced that he would move ahead with drug testing on able-bodied adults applying for food stamps, something the Obama administration had successfully blocked in the past. The Trump administration is also expected to announce that it would allow states to impose work requirements for Medicaid recipients - moves that anti-poverty advocates see as an assault on the safety net for vulnerable Americans." <http://politi.co/2nx5HK>

-- **BEHIND THE SCENES**, there is a lot of trepidation about taking up a massive entitlement overhaul within months of a midterm election that could be bruising for the Republican Party, especially in the House. Welfare reform is something that could deeply divide House Republicans.

NYT'S JONATHAN MARTIN and MAGGIE HABERMAN: "Trump's Endorsement of Roy Moore Points Up a G.O.P. Problem: Chaos": "In a departure from every modern White House, Mr. Trump himself largely dictates whom to back and how to support his preferred candidates. Even before tensions between the president and Senate Republicans flared back up over Mr. Moore's candidacy, there was little regular communication between West Wing officials and Republicans overseeing the 2018 races, Republicans say.

"The scheduled meetings between the White House, the Republican National Committee and the House and Senate campaign committees stopped months ago. Congressional officials find it difficult to get presidential signoffs for even small requests like using Mr. Trump's name in direct-mail appeals, according to party officials. And less than a month until the election year begins, he has not scheduled a single fund-raiser for a candidate running for the House, Senate or governor. ...

"Yet the president does not completely understand his role as a principal, Republicans say, and his political operation does not have enough sway with him to make him fully grasp that he is the leader of the Republican Party. For example, he is

still telling his friends who attend high-dollar committee fund-raisers that they do not need to pay, the sort of favoritism that can create endless headaches for staff."

<http://nyti.ms/2BEzZh2>

-- **"The RNC's Silent Decision To Back Roy Moore Again - And How It Upset Everyone,"** by BuzzFeed's Henry J. Gomez and Alexis Levinson: "The [RNC's] renewed support for Roy Moore comes with a peculiar caveat: No one at the RNC is actually defending the decision publicly. The news broke late Monday, via Breitbart, the far-right website that never wavered in its support for Moore, even after accusations that the Alabama Senate candidate dated teenage girls as an adult and made sexual advances on a minor. Moore denies the allegations. RNC officials subsequently confirmed the move to BuzzFeed News and others on the condition that they not be identified in the stories.

"On Tuesday -- as the national party took a beating for the decision -- including from many fellow Republicans, the RNC remained silent. Several RNC committee members acknowledged frustrations but would not speak on the record. Senior party leaders punted questions to spokespersons who declined to comment. 'Oh man,' said a source close to the RNC. 'It's embarrassing.'" <http://bzfd.it/2knuDDI>

-- **"Bannon welcomes Moore back to the GOP fold at Alabama rally,"** by Kevin Robillard in Fairhope, Alabama: "Roy Moore is fully back in the Republican fold, and Steve Bannon was here to greet him. Moore, the GOP Senate candidate to replace Attorney General Jeff Sessions, has faced multiple accusations of predatory sexual behavior aimed at young women and girls. (Moore has denied the allegations.) The NRSC, RNC and a slew of elected officials pulled their support.

"Bannon held firm, and now President Donald Trump, the RNC and the GOP base are all back with the twice-ousted former Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. At a rally here in a barn at Oak Hollow Farm, in an affluent suburb on the eastern shore of the Mobile Bay, Bannon, Moore and a host of other staunch backers of the president took turns taking shots at the media, the GOP establishment, and Moore's Democratic opponent, former U.S. Attorney Doug Jones. The rally here was a replay of a rally Bannon and a host of other conservative figures held for Moore on the eve of the September runoff." <http://politi.co/2knvJyX>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Congress to Grill Trump's Data Guru and His Longtime Assistant," by The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff: "Alexander Nix, the data guru who offered to help Julian Assange distribute Hillary Clinton's emails, is scheduled to testify before the House intelligence committee on Dec. 14, according to a source familiar with the committee's interview schedule. The committee is also scheduled to interview Rhona Graff, Trump's longtime personal assistant, on Dec. 22. Rob Goldstone- the music publicist who helped arrange the notorious June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Jared Kushner, Paul Manafort, Donald Trump Jr., and Kremlin-linked Russian operatives-offered to send information on the meeting to Trump himself through Graff." <http://thebea.st/2Aww8W7>

-- **"Donald Trump Jr. asked Russian lawyer for info on Clinton Foundation,"** by NBC News' Ken Dilanian and Natasha Lebedeva: "Donald Trump Jr. asked a Russian lawyer at the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting whether she had evidence of illegal donations to the Clinton Foundation, the lawyer told the Senate Judiciary Committee in answers to written questions obtained exclusively by NBC News.

"The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, told the committee that she didn't have any such evidence, and that she believes Trump misunderstood the nature of the meeting after receiving emails from a music promoter promising incriminating information on Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump's Democratic opponent. Once it became apparent that she did not have meaningful information about Clinton, Trump seemed to lose interest, Veselnitskaya said, and the meeting petered out." <http://nbcnews.to/2krExnm>

-- **JOSH MEYER: "Investigators probe European travel of Trump associates":** "Several people close to then-candidate Trump visited Europe during and after the campaign, including his son Donald Trump Jr., Trump lawyer Michael Cohen and foreign policy advisers Carter Page, George Papadopoulos and Jeffrey Gordon. Their known destinations include London, Paris, Budapest and Athens. But their explanations of those trips have not always been forthcoming, and some congressional investigators find their stories suspect." <http://politi.co/2jkgEuy>

THE JUICE...

-- **DANIELLE BURR** of Peck Madigan Jones is joining Uber as its new head of federal affairs.

--**HOT TICKET -- STEVE BANNON, NEWT GINGRICH, LAWRENCE KADISH and ED ROGERS** are hosting a book launch party for Corey Lewandowski and Dave Bossie's new book "Let Trump Be Trump" tomorrow night from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Trump hotel. **See the invite** <http://politi.co/2irQ2aa>

--**PLAYBOOK HOLIDAY PARTY GUIDE -- Tonight:** The Hoover Institution is hosting is annual holiday party titled "A Winter Wonderland" at its D.C. office. ... **Tomorrow:** The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has its annual holiday reception at its HQ. ... CBS is having its annual holiday press party at Black Rock in NYC. ... The Economist is hosting a party to celebrate the publication of "The World in 2018" at Delicatessen in Soho in NYC. ... Sonoran Policy Group has a holiday party at the rooftop of the Graham in Georgetown.

...

... **Saturday:** Sara and Ron Bonjean will host their annual massive party this year titled "T'Was the 16th Night Before Christmas Party" at their home in Alexandria. ... **Sunday:** Lynne Weil and Nils Bruzelius have their annual Glogg party at their house on Capitol Hill.

YOU'RE INVITED -- Our first live podcast taping is **TOMORROW** night at 7 p.m. at

Sixth and I. Our inaugural guests: **MICHAEL BARBARO**, host of the New York Times' hit podcast "The Daily," **DCCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAN SENA** and **NRCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN ROGERS**. And a panel of **POLITICO** stars: **RACHAEL BADE**, **SEUNG MIN KIM** and **ANNIE KARNI**. Get your tickets now!
<http://bit.ly/2hWK7tF>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former President Barack Obama shares a laugh with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel after Emanuel introduced Obama at a summit on climate change involving mayors from around the globe On Dec. 5 in Chicago. | Charles Rex Arbogast/AP Photo

CLICKER - "READ: The Op-Ed Manafort Is Accused Of Ghostwriting With A Russian Asset" - TPM: <http://bit.ly/2jY5QCc>

THE RESISTANCE -- "Consumer Bureau's New Leader Steers a Sudden Reversal," by NYT's Jessica Silver-Greenberg and Stacy Cowley: "Some employees, including a few of the bureau's top officials, have welcomed their new leader. Others, pointing to [Mick] Mulvaney's earlier hostility toward the agency and its mission, are quietly resisting. One small group calls itself 'Dumbledore's Army,' according to two of the people who were familiar with their discussions. The name is a reference to a secret resistance force in the 'Harry Potter' books. An atmosphere of intense anxiety has taken hold, several employees said. In some cases, conversations between staff that used to take place by phone or text now happen almost exclusively in person or through encrypted messaging apps." <http://nyti.ms/2zQKAEV>

BIG WEINSTEIN PIECE -- NYT'S MEGAN TWOHEY, JODI KANTOR, SUSAN DOMINUS, JIM RUTENBERG and STEVE EDER: "Weinstein's Complicity Machine: The producer Harvey Weinstein relied on powerful relationships across industries to provide him with cover as accusations of sexual misconduct piled up for decades": "A master of leverage, Mr. Weinstein parlayed his films into relationships across the worlds of entertainment, politics, publishing and beyond, achieving a stature that at times proved useful in intimidating others and protecting himself. 'I know the president of the United States. Who do you know?' Mr. Weinstein, a Democratic fund-raiser, would say during the years Barack Obama was in the White House, adding expletives. 'I'm Harvey Weinstein,' he used to say. 'You know what I can do.'

"In late September, emails show, he was discussing a documentary television show he was working on with Hillary Clinton. He had long raised campaign cash for her, and her feminist credentials helped burnish his image -- even though Tina Brown, the magazine editor, and Lena Dunham, the writer and actress, each say they had cautioned Mrs. Clinton's aides about his treatment of women. Now, Mr. Weinstein

exchanged questions about distribution rights for the show. 'I am hopeful we can get a good price for this,' Robert Barnett, Mrs. Clinton's lawyer, replied. ...

"In 2016, Lena Dunham, the writer and actress, said she was troubled by the producer's visible presence during Mrs. Clinton's presidential run, hosting fund-raisers and appearing at campaign events. She had heard stories, both directly and secondhand from other actresses, about disturbing encounters with him, she said. So in March last year, Ms. Dunham, a vocal Clinton supporter, said she warned the campaign." <http://nyti.ms/2AwCrsD>

LISTEN IN -- Anna talks with Centrolina chef Amy Brandwein in the latest Women Rule podcast. **Listen** <http://bit.ly/2irRyJo>

***** **A message from PhRMA** : A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "Behind the Murdochs' Sale Talks: Scale, Price and Family Dynamics," by WSJ's Amol Sharma, Joe Flint and Keach Hagey: "[T]he power-sharing arrangement instituted by Mr. Murdoch, 86 years old, in 2015 with the elevation of his sons, James and Lachlan, has faced stresses. The power-sharing setup made James Murdoch, 44, the chief executive of 21st Century Fox. Lachlan Murdoch, 46, is co-executive chairman of the company alongside his father and is viewed as the first among equals. At times, James has felt like a CEO in title only, according to some people who know him. These people say James was never keen about the setup, is ready for a new chapter in his career and has sometimes been on a different page from his father and brother. Despite having stepped down as CEO, the elder Mr. Murdoch has deepened his involvement in Fox, partly because he took the helm at Fox News last year to stabilize the network in the wake of a sexual-harassment scandal." <http://on.wsj.com/2AWxA4I>

-- SCOOPLET -- FOREIGN POLICY MAGAZINE was planning on including **SEN. AL FRANKEN** (D-Minn.) on its annual "Global Thinkers" list that was released this week. But they took him off the list when the sexual harassment allegations surfaced. A magazine spokeswoman told us: "[W]e were planning to make him an awardee but removed him from the list when we heard of his inappropriate behavior." Franken's office did not reply to a request for comment. **The list** <http://atfp.co/2AyyBNA>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi having dinner last night at Tosca with her husband Paul ... Susan Rice dining last night at La Piquette ... Sean Spicer walking

off a plane at DCA at 8:35 Tuesday evening, "wearing a sporty vest, earbuds in," per our tipster.

HOLIDAY PARTY CIRCUIT -- SPOTTED at the French Embassy's annual holiday gala at Ambassador Gérard Araud's residence in Kalorama: Justice and Mrs. Stephen Breyer, Sens. Chris Coons (D-Del.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), and Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Tammy Haddad, Michael LaRosa, Phil Rucker, Jesse Rodriguez, Ryan Williams, Susan Glasser, Kevin Baron, Virginia Coyne, Eric Fanning, Neera Tanden, Wolf Blitzer, Jim Lehrer, Christine Lagarde, Vinoda Basnayake, Andrea Mitchell, Indira Lakshmanan, Ashley and Ben Chang, Suzanne Kianpour, David Sanger, Francesca Craig, Rima Al Sabah, Amb. Kim Darroch, Bob Barnett and Rita Braver, Amb. Dina Kavar, Fred and Ginny Ryan, Kristen Soltis Anderson, Elizabeth Thorp, Kathleen Biden, Steve Clemons, Paula Dobriansky, Ben Rhodes and Ann Norris, Jonathan Silver and Melissa Moss.

SPOTTED at Microsoft's annual Holiday Open House at the Microsoft Innovation & Policy Center on Tuesday night: Victoria Espinel, Mike Gallagher, Nuala O'Connor, Tammy Haddad, Dr. Bruce Gellin, Fred Humphries, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Reps. Jim Himes (D-Conn.), Lacy Clay (D-Mo.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), Anthony Brown (D-Md.), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Lou Correa (D-Calif.), Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.), Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Jerry McNerney (D-Calif.), Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), and Rick Larsen (D-Wash.).

TRANSITIONS -- Tim Cameron and Kegan Beran are launching a media strategy firm focused on helping Republicans with their paid media and digital efforts. Cameron previously served as the top digital strategist for the NRSC, former Speaker Newt Gingrich, and House Republican Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers. Beran previously served as president of Strategic Media Placement where he advised clients including Mike Pence, John Kasich, NRSC, Sens. John Boozman (R-Ark.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), and Steve Daines (R-Mont.).

BIRTHWEEK (was Monday): former Transportation Secretary Mary Peters turned 69.

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: former Sen. **Don Nickles** (R-Okla.), now chairman and CEO of the Nickles Group. He's celebrating by "having lunch with kids at Nobu ... dinner with spouse at Chez Francois." **His assessment of how the Trump presidency is going:** "His tweets are undermining the office ... and his chances of success." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2B62Dv9>

--Julian E. Zelizer, professor of history and public affairs at Princeton and a CNN political analyst. **How he got his start in his career:** "My academic career started when I finished my Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University writing a dissertation about Wilbur Mills -- the congressman who wrote Medicare but was more famous for dipping into the Tidal Basin with an Argentine stripper named Fanne Fox. Early on, I also caught the

journalism bug. I earned my chops by appearing on the local CBS morning news show in upstate New York (once the hosts were dressed in Survivor costumes) and talking with callers about the NFL on the local ESPN radio as 'the professor.'" **Q&A:**

<http://politi.co/2kmVsHM>

BIRTHDAYS: N.Y. Gov. Andrew Cuomo is 6-0 ... former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is 72 (hat tip: Jill Zuckman) ... National Law Journal's Cogan Schneier (h/t roommate and former colleague Eliza Collins) ... Dave Lugar ... Shareblue Media's Eric Boehlert ... Craigslist's Craig Newmark is 65 ... Hugo Gurdon, editorial director at the Washington Examiner ... Maia Johnson ... Mike Scotto ... Meg Reilly ... Angelica Annino, director of scheduling for Sen. Michael Bennet (h/t fiancé Joe Walsh) ... Rep Mia Love (R-Utah) is 42 ... WashTimes' Maria Stainer ... Mike Johnson ... Mike Netherton ... Nickie Titus ... ABC7 alum Cynné Simpson ... Bruno Florio ... Dana Brisbane of Twitter ... John Dogero ... Boehner alum Bill Greene ... Trav Robertson ... Amb. Nancy Brinker ... Edelman's Brendan Daley ...

... **Roy Milan Schultheis**, COS for Rep. Curbelo (h/t fiancée Ruth Guerra) ... Dan Levitan of BerlinRosen ... WSJ's Sara Germano ... Michael Greenstone, economics professor at University of Chicago ... Francis Brennan, the co-founder of the NTK Network and an alum of Mitt Romney, the Free Beacon and America Rising, is 28 (h/t Colin Reed) ... Evelyn Chang of the Open Society Foundations and a DNC alum (h/t Jonathan Kaplan) ... Bennett Roth ... Rouben Gregorian (h/t Nika Nour) ... Peg Bailey ... Amy Call Well of Ernst & Young ... CNN aviation editor Jon Ostrower ... Jack Gocke ... Smyth Fleming ... VOA's Jamie Dettmer ... Amy Well ... Oliver Willis ... Julianne Prok ... Ryan Sellinger ... Emily Barocas Carruth ... Lisa Antonelli Bacon ... Jeff Parcher ... Michael Johnson ... Jack Gocke ... Greg Butler is 6-0 ... Anne Crosson McMenamin ... Erin Rapp ... Kimberlin Love ... Gina Acosta ... Casey Fitzpatrick ... Luke Letlow ... Jerad Reimers ... Glenn Rushing ... Sera Alptekin ... JoAnna Richard ... Jeff Mayers ... Tim Brown ... JD Stier (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

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Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 5/11/2017 8:11:15 PM
Subject: RE: Please tweet from the EPA account

Or we can just re-tweet

<https://twitter.com/NTKNet/status/862756702017421312>

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2017 4:07 PM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Cc: Freire, JP <Freire.JP@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Please tweet from the EPA account

Need To Know Network: Pruitt Promises to Put States Back in the Driver's Seat on Regulations
<http://ntknetwork.com/pruitt-promises-to-put-states-back-in-the-drivers-seat-on-regulations/>

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:41:41 PM
Subject: RE: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 12/6/2017 6:15:35 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by PhRMA: Senate Democrats call on FRANKEN to resign after another allegation -- TRUMP says shutdown 'could happen' -- SHERMAN/BADE SCOOP: RYAN shuffles another 2 mil to the NRCC

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- EMAIL to the Washington press corps from Sen. Al Franken's (D-Minn.) office at 12:26 p.m.: "Wanted to let you know that Senator Franken will be making an announcement tomorrow. More details to come.

SENATE DEMOCRATS TOSS FRANKEN TO THE CURB -- Democratic Sens. **MAZIE HIRONO (HAWAII)**, **KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND (N.Y.)**, **CLAIRE MCCASKILL (MO.)**, **MAGGIE HASSAN (N.H.)**, **PATTY MURRAY (WASH.)**, **KAMALA HARRIS (CALIF.)**, **TAMMY BALDWIN (WISC.)**, **HEIDI HEITKAMP (N.D.)**, **DEBBIE STABENOW (MICH.)**, **MARIA CANTWELL (WASH.)** have all called on Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) to step down after POLITICO's Heather Caygle reported on another allegation against Franken from a former Democratic congressional aide in 2006, when he was a radio host. **THE FIRST MAN** was **SEN. BOB CASEY (PA.)**, followed by **SHERROD BROWN (OHIO)**, **JOE DONNELLY (IND.)**, **DICK DURBIN (ILL.)**, **ED MARKEY (MASS)** and **MICHAEL BENNET (COLO.)**. **DNC CHAIR TOM PEREZ** also called on Franken to resign.

-- HEATHER'S SCOOP: "A former Democratic congressional aide said Al Franken tried to forcibly kiss her after a taping of his radio show in 2006, three years before he became a U.S. senator. The aide, whose name POLITICO is withholding to protect her identity, said Franken (D-Minn.) pursued her after her boss had left the studio. She said she was gathering her belongings to follow her boss out of the room. When she turned around, Franken was in her face. The former staffer ducked to avoid Franken's lips. As she hastily left the room, she said, Franken told her: 'It's my right as an entertainer.'

"He was between me and the door and he was coming at me to kiss me. It was very quick and I think my brain had to work really hard to be like 'Wait, what is happening?' But I knew whatever was happening was not right and I ducked," the aide said in an interview. "I was really startled by it and I just sort of booked it towards the door and he said, 'It's my right as an entertainer.'" ...

"Franken, who has been accused by six other women of groping or trying to forcibly kiss them, denied the accusation. 'This allegation is categorically not true and the idea

that I would claim this as my right as an entertainer is preposterous. I look forward to fully cooperating with the ongoing ethics committee investigation,' Franken said in a statement to POLITICO." <http://politi.co/2BNoJQh>

-- **Gillibrand:** "I have been shocked and disappointed to learn over the last few weeks that a colleague I am fond of personally has engaged in behavior towards women that is unacceptable. I consider Senator Franken to be a friend and have enjoyed working with him in the Senate in our shared fight to help American families. But this moment of reckoning about our friends and colleagues who have been accused of sexual misconduct is necessary, and it is painful. We must not lose sight that this watershed moment is bigger than any one industry, any one party, or any one person." *Full statement* <http://bit.ly/2BPzK3l>

MURRAY is a member of Senate Democratic leadership. It's tough to see how Franken hangs on now. **INTERESTING LINE FROM MURRAY'S STATEMENT:** "I believe service in politics and government is a noble pursuit, and all those who pursue it are flawed in some way. But I also believe public service demands higher standards - standards we choose to live by the moment we enter public life." *Full statement* <http://bit.ly/2ktb9NO>

-- **@seungminkim:** "Chris Coons reminds us, as he will about 47 times later today, that he is the vice chair of Ethics and can't comment on matters that may be pending before committee".

FAIR QUESTION: WHAT'S THE FREEDOM CAUCUS DOING? -- THE HOUSE FREEDOM CAUCUS, the group of 30 or so conservative Republican lawmakers who have outsized influence over the House floor, are asking leadership to plus up defense spending -- but leave domestic spending untouched. This is a non-starter, and many of them privately know this. But the Freedom Caucus wants the leadership to hold strong. This does not bode well for Washington's December.

-- **BUT MARK YOUR CALENDARS:** It is beginning to look like Congress will be here between Christmas and New Years.

AP'S KEN THOMAS (@KThomasDC): "I asked POTUS if we're going to have a shutdown. Trump: 'It could happen. The Democrats are really looking at something that is very dangerous to our country. They are looking at shutting down ... they want to have illegal immigrants pouring into our country.'"

Good Wednesday afternoon. DON'T FORGET to get your tickets to our first live podcast taping tomorrow at 7 p.m. at Sixth & I. Our guests include "The Daily" host Michael Barbaro, DCCC Executive Director Dan Sena and NRCC Executive Director John Rogers plus a panel of POLITICO stars Rachael Bade, Seung Min Kim and Annie Karni. **On sale here** <http://bit.ly/2i1rIM4>

SCOOP, from Jake and Rachael Bade : **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** is transferring \$2

million to the NRCC in November. Ryan has transferred \$32 million to the NRCC this year.

FLYNN UPDATE -- "Flynn texted partners about nuclear plan during inauguration, whistleblower says," by Kyle Cheney: "Congressional Democrats said Wednesday they have evidence from a confidential whistleblower that within minutes of President Donald Trump's inauguration, then-national security adviser Michael Flynn sent assurances to former business partners that a plan to build nuclear reactors across the Middle East was 'good to go.' Democrats on the House oversight committee said in a letter dated Wednesday that the whistleblower reported attending an inauguration day event with Flynn's former business associate Alex Copson, the managing partner of ACU Strategic Partners." <http://politi.co/2BQNX0j>

HMM... -- "Romney and Trump spoke following trip to Utah, Conway says," by CNN's Maegan Vazquez: "White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said Wednesday that President Donald Trump and Mitt Romney spoke by phone following the President's trip to Utah on Monday. 'The President and Gov. Romney spoke, I don't know, 10 hours ago, less than 12 hours ago, and people should know that because otherwise there's speculation,' Conway told CNN's Chris Cuomo on CNN's 'New Day.' Conway said that the two have a 'great relationship' and discussed tax cuts and Trump's recent decision to shrink the Bears Ears monument." <http://cnn.it/2AWcXW9>

PAGING CORY GARDNER -- @BenSasse, quote-tweeting a report that the RNC transferred cash to the Alabama Republican Party to boost Roy Moore: "This is a bad decision and very sad day. I believe the women--and RNC previously did too. What's changed? Or is the party just indifferent? ... If the political committee that I'm a part of (the NRSC) decides to contribute here, I will no longer be a donor to or fund-raiser for it."

***** **A message from PhRMA:** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

IT'S OFFICIAL -- @DHSgov: "Today, Kirstjen Nielsen was sworn-in as the sixth Secretary of Homeland Security." ***Pic -- with John Kelly holding the bible***
<http://bit.ly/2BPK23Q>

TIME'S PERSON OF THE YEAR -- "THE SILENCE BREAKERS" -- by Stephanie Zacharek, Eliana Dockterman and Haley Sweetland Edwards: "This reckoning appears to have sprung up overnight. But it has actually been simmering for years, decades, centuries. Women have had it with bosses and co-workers who not only cross boundaries but don't even seem to know that boundaries exist. They've had it with the fear of retaliation, of being blackballed, of being fired from a job they can't afford to lose. They've had it with the code of going along to get along. They've had it with men who

use their power to take what they want from women. These silence breakers have started a revolution of refusal, gathering strength by the day, and in the past two months alone, their collective anger has spurred immediate and shocking results: nearly every day, CEOs have been fired, moguls toppled, icons disgraced. In some cases, criminal charges have been brought." <http://ti.me/2BMtF7P>

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- THE MOSCOW TIMES: "Putin Announces 2018

Presidential Bid, Surprising No One": "Vladimir Putin on Wednesday announced he is running for the presidency in upcoming elections, seeking a fourth term next year that would extend his rule into 2024. The longtime president is practically guaranteed to win. A September poll by the independent Levada Center put his approval ratings at 83 percent. Next year's elections on March 18 are timed to coincide with the anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine - an event which largely consolidated Putin's popularity at home." <http://bit.ly/2AWhFmI>

DATA DIVE -- "We Got Government Data On 20 Years Of Workplace Sexual

Harassment Claims. These Charts Break It Down," by BuzzFeed's Lam Thuy Vo: "BuzzFeed News received a trove of data on every sexual harassment claim filed between fiscal years 1995 and 2016 with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency that enforces laws meant to protect workers from discrimination. The more than 170,000 claims, which didn't include identifying details, represent just a sliver of the countless incidents in the everyday workplace that don't receive prominent attention or go unnoticed. Overall, women filed 83% of the claims; men filed 15%. The remaining 2% didn't specify a gender." <http://bzfd.it/2BNFpHj>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- California Republicans weather super PAC ads -- Massachusetts Republicans flip longtime Dem state Senate seat

<http://politi.co/2BM9WoW>

-- "As Trump looms, Cuomo and Murphy tiptoe toward a perilous relationship," by POLITICO New York's Dana Rubinstein and Ryan Hutchins: "In their first press conference together -- a media call-cum-tirade against the Trump tax plan -- Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York and Gov.-elect Phil Murphy of New Jersey expressed a chumminess that bordered on hokey. ... Their gestures of public affection belie a more precarious reality. As Cuomo tacks left in preparation for a potential presidential run in 2020, a Democrat is ascending to office in Cuomo's backyard with none of the baggage Cuomo carries from his seven years as a triangulating Democrat. ...

"If Murphy's expected, out-of-the-gate liberalism underscores Cuomo's own vulnerabilities on the progressive front, it's not the only potential pitfall in their formative relationship. There's also the state of the region's infrastructure and the limited pool of money available to address it. 'They're gonna kill each other,' said David Wildstein, the admitted mastermind of the George Washington Bridge scandal and a former Christie appointee at the Port Authority." <http://politi.co/2AVIojd>

VALLEYTALK -- "Inside Oracle's cloak-and-dagger political war with Google," by

Recode's Tony Romm: "For the past year, the software and cloud computing giant [Oracle] has mounted a cloak-and-dagger, take-no-prisoners lobbying campaign against Google, perhaps hoping to cause the company intense political and financial pain at a time when the two tech giants are also warring in federal court over allegations of stolen computer code.

"Since 2010, Oracle has accused Google of copying Java and using key portions of it in the making of Android. Google, for its part, has fought those claims vigorously. More recently, though, their standoff has intensified. And as a sign of the worsening rift between them, this summer Oracle tried to sell reporters on a story about the privacy pitfalls of Android, two sources confirmed to Recode. ... Still, Oracle's campaign is undeniable. In Washington, D.C., for example, it has devoted a slice of its \$8.8 million in lobbying spending so far in 2017 to challenging Google in key policy debates. It has sought penalties against Google in Europe, meanwhile, and it even purchased billboard ads in Tennessee just to antagonize its tech peer, sources said." <http://bit.ly/2kt70cl>

SPORTS BLINK -- NYT'S JERE LONGMAN: "Did Russia Get Off Easy in Olympic Ban? Read the Fine Print": "Despite hyperbolic language that Russia had been barred from the 2018 Winter Olympics, in truth it may have gotten off fairly lightly for undermining the previous Winter Games, which it hosted, with systematic doping. Russian athletes will still be allowed to compete in February in South Korea if they can show they have passed rigorous drug screening protocols. And they will wear uniforms that identify them as an 'Olympic Athlete From Russia' instead of as an independent athlete.

"Yes, the Russian Olympic Committee has been suspended. And its athletes would not march under the Russian flag at the opening ceremony or hear the Russian anthem played if they win gold medals (they will hear the Olympic anthem). But the punishment would have been much harsher with a prohibition of all Russian athletes."

<http://nyti.ms/2AWghAw>

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "Spies, Dossiers, and the Insane Lengths Restaurants Go to Track and Influence Food Critics," by Washingtonian's Jessica Sidman: "A vast and complex Underworld is devoted to identifying and understanding critics. Some of it is pretty obvious. You'll find photos of food writers plastered in restaurant kitchens or embedded in staff training manuals. Many restaurants go further, applying CIA-level tactics to tracking personal information and preferences of the people who might write about them. One dossier -- or 'critic bible' -- I reported on a few years ago noted that [WaPo critic Tom] Sietsema 'tends to get wrapped up in his conversations,' among other observations about the local food-writer set.

"The handbook went on to list likes, dislikes, and which type of server would be best matched to which writer ('most personable,' 'engaging but hands off'). It rated each journalist's writing skill and food-and-beverage knowledge. The dossier's creator, it turned out, came from politics -- he considered the information to be opposition research of sorts. 'When you're in a field where somebody's there to criticize you,' he told me,

'you need as much information about that person as you can get to understand their position.'" <http://bit.ly/2BMQMz7>

TRANSITIONS -- **Mellody Hobson, Sharon Percy Rockefeller**, and retired Adm. **James Stavridis** have been named to the Rockefeller Foundation board of trustees. ... **Kris Kitto** has started as a VP in the San Francisco office of Brooklyn-based PR firm Ditto where he will oversee West Coast account teams and help managing director Blain Rethmeier with business development. Kitto was most recently a director at SHIFT Communications. ... **Paris Dennard** has been named as a member of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

REMEMBERING MICKEY CARROLL -- The longtime journalist, professor and spokesman for the Quinnipiac Poll died today at his home in New Jersey after a short illness. A memorial mass will be held December 14, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church in Morristown, NJ. ***Matt Friedman's obituary in POLITICO New Jersey*** <http://politi.co/2kqrcvN>

HOLIDAY PARTY WATCH -- VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE will be the special guest at America First Action's Christmas party at the Trump International Hotel next Wednesday.

SPOTTED: Audrey Gelman at breakfast this morning with Giovanna Lockhart at the Four Seasons

SPOTTED at Third Way's annual holiday party last night at their new offices: Matt Bennett, Jim Kessler, and Nancy Hale, Jeremy Joseph, Elizabeth Falcone, James Leuschen, Izzy Klein, Mark Henson, Jason Rae, Jonathan Stahler, Jonathan Kott, Erin Simpson, Loren Schulman, Lauren Oppenheimer, Ben Chang, Eric Spiegelman.

SPOTTED at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Tribute Dinner last night honoring U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, retired Gen. Tony Zinni and retired Adm. James Stavridis: Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Todd Young (R-Ind.), Reps. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), David Cicilline (D-R.I.) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), David Abney, Sean Callahan, retired Gens. Michael Hayden and George Casey, retired Adms. James Loy, William Fallon and Eric Olson, Ambassador Deborah Birx, Kathy Calvin, Sherrie Westin, Joe Johns, Amanda Carpenter, Michelle Kosinski, Dan Reilly, Elise Labott, Matt Mowers, John Rader, Everett Eissenstat, Rob Blair, Rich Ashooh, Bill Steiger, Clete Willems, and Bill Inglee.

BONUS BIRTHDAY -- Evelyn Farkas, who is celebrating with a dinner party thrown by her friends ... Smyth Fleming, the pride of Public Citizen's Amanda Fleming and STG's Chris Fleming, is 13.

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many

cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

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Need To Know Network: Pruitt Promises to Put States Back in the Driver's Seat on Regulations
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Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Timothy Cama[tcama@thehill.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:42:59 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Timothy Cama [mailto:tcama@thehill.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Hi-

Could you confirm the Washington Post report that EPA is ending the Definers contract?

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer

The Hill

(202) 695-6245

Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 12/7/2017 11:25:35 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: STATE DEPT issues 'worldwide caution,' as HAMAS calls for UPRISING IN ISRAEL after Trump announcement -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Tax air wars in NY -- TOM LOBIANCO writing Pence book -- THE WING holds D.C. welcome dinner

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

THE STATE DEPARTMENT has issued a "worldwide caution" for U.S. citizens traveling the world. **MATT LEE**, the AP's longtime diplomatic correspondent ([@APDiploWriter](https://twitter.com/APDiploWriter)), says: "The last time the @StateDept issued a 'Worldwide Caution' because of a US policy decision was March 2003 at the start of the Iraq war." ***The State Department memo*** <http://bit.ly/2B0IFkY>

AP/GAZA CITY, at 4:18 a.m.: "GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Hamas leader calls for new uprising against Israel in wake of US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital."

-- **ADELSON'S PAPER -- ISRAEL HAYOM FRONT PAGE:** In English: "Thank you, Mr. President! Jerusalem" (the "usa" in Jerusalem is colored with the American flag). In Hebrew: "The capital of Israel" <http://bit.ly/2jYPwAZ>

WSJ EDITORIAL -- "The Reality of Jerusalem": "Arab leaders denounced the Embassy move, but we wonder how long the fury will last. The Sunni Arabs also confront the threats of Islamic terrorism and Iranian imperialism, and the Palestinians are a third order concern. If the movement of an American Embassy that was signaled more than 20 years ago is enough to scuttle peace talks, then maybe the basis for peace doesn't yet exist." <http://on.wsj.com/2AZOrU3>

Good Thursday morning. EXPECTED TODAY: House Republican leaders tell us they feel confident they will pass a bill to fund government for two weeks. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) is widely expected to resign. And Congressional leaders head to the White House for fiscal talks.

TRUTH BOMB: THE NEXT MONTH IS GOING TO BE A MESS -- It looks like Congress is going to avoid a government shutdown this week. But this is only the beginning of a very, very messy month for Republican leaders. Top GOP lawmakers, at the moment, are not completely certain how they'll fund the government when funding expires on Dec. 22. One idea bouncing around is for the House to send the Senate a bill it won't even be able to take up -- a yearlong bill that increases military spending but doesn't bump domestic spending. Conservatives are itching for House Republican leaders to stand firm when the Senate rejects its opening funding salvo later this month.

-- **ALSO TOUGH:** Republicans and Democrats are almost certain to cut a deal to boost spending, renew CHIP -- the massive children's health program and bolster Obamacare. Some of that could come at the end of the month, or next month, on the back of an omnibus spending package, which will lump together 12 spending bills. The mood isn't good at the moment, and it only seems to be getting worse. Optimists hope tax reform makes all Republicans happy. Color us a tad skeptical.

AROUND THE TAX REFORM HORN ...

-- **HOUSE/SENATE DIFFERENCES: "Tax Bill Is Likely to Undo Health Insurance Mandate, Republicans Say,"** by NYT's Robert Pear and Tom Kaplan: "House and Senate negotiators thrashing out differences over a major tax bill are likely to eliminate the insurance coverage mandate at the heart of the Affordable Care Act, lawmakers say.

"But a deal struck by Senate Republican leaders and Senator Susan Collins of Maine to mitigate the effect of the repeal has been all but rejected by House Republicans, potentially jeopardizing Ms. Collins's final yes vote. 'I don't think the American people voted for bailing out big insurance,' said Representative Dave Brat, Republican of Virginia, who opposes a separate measure to lower insurance premiums that Ms. Collins thought she had secured." <http://nyti.ms/2AZIhU0>

-- **THE FIGHT OVER 20 PERCENT: "Corporate rate cut in tax bill could change as GOP hunts for votes,"** by Seung Min Kim, Nancy Cook and Bernie Becker: "In a closed-door meeting Wednesday with CEOs from the Business Roundtable, Republican Sen. Pat Toomey and White House economic adviser Gary Cohn in separate sessions told the crowd their strong preference was to keep the corporate rate at 20 percent, where it is now in the legislation, even as lawmakers were under intense pressure to find new revenue, according to three people familiar with the meeting.

"Both men left the crowd with the impression that the corporate rate was a target in the hunt for that revenue and could rise as a result. ... Each percentage point the corporate rate increases is worth about \$100 billion over a decade. The top corporate rate is now 35 percent. ...

"Boosting the corporate tax rate could open a floodgate of other demands from lawmakers seeking to get provisions in the tax bill. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), for

instance, told POLITICO on Wednesday that if the rate goes up to 22 percent 'and they don't use some portion of it to help' boost the child tax credit, 'I'm going to have a big problem.'" <http://politi.co/2nARlnh>

-- K STREET INC.: "Lawmakers face pressure to save deductions for mortgage interest and state and local taxes," by Theo Meyer, Aaron Lorenzo and Colin Wilhelm: "Lobbyists have launched an all-out effort to save tax breaks and protect powerful industries as the Republicans' tax overhaul lurches toward President Donald Trump's desk. Builders and real estate interests are pushing to save the mortgage interest deduction. Businesses are fighting to strip out a last-minute provision inserted into the Senate bill that would preserve the corporate alternative minimum tax. And a coalition of trade groups and local government leaders is urging Republicans not to cut the state and local tax deduction.

"With Trump pressing Congress to send him a bill before Christmas, lobbyists must decide where they want to focus their efforts over the next week. Some are working the senators and representatives who will make up the conference committee charged with ironing out the differences between the House and Senate bill. Others are working to persuade Republican leaders or leaning on the members of Congress whose constituents may see their taxes go up if changes aren't made to the bill." <http://politi.co/2nCatqu>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- TAX AIR WARS IN NEW YORK - 45Committee, a group backed by the Adelson and Ricketts families, is launching ads against House GOP members who opposed both the tax bill and Obamacare repeal. The first ad -- on which the group says it's spending six figures -- criticizes Rep. Dan Donovan (R-N.Y.) for saying he is opposed to Obamacare and supports a tax overhaul, but voting against them. It's part of 45Committee's \$10 million effort on tax reform, a representative of the group said. The ad's narrator ends the spot by saying "If he won't keep his word and support tax reform, how can we ever trust him again?" **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2Ah695L>

-- SCOOP: AMERICAN ACTION NETWORK is putting \$2 million on TV, explaining what they believe the tax bill would do for 24 districts across the country. **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2joVCeo>

WSJ'S KRISTINA PETERSON and KATE DAVIDSON: "House Republicans Weigh Linking Debt Ceiling Increase to Spending Bill": "Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, a member of House GOP leadership and the head of a working group of House Republicans on the debt limit, said lawmakers were considering increasing the debt ceiling as part of the bill funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year, known as an omnibus.

"GOP leaders are likely to seek to raise the debt limit enough to last at least through next November's midterm elections, lawmakers and aides said. They will have to act, likely by March, to avoid a default.

"There's just going to be an omnibus at some point, probably after the first of the year,' Mr. Collins said in an interview this week. 'Probably there'll be some debt ceiling discussions with the White House [going] into that bigger omnibus bill,' he said, but noted that the group of 23 House Republicans hadn't reached a final decision."

<http://on.wsj.com/2nBwOoh>

***** **A message from PhRMA** : A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

IF YOU READ ONE THING - POLITICO MAGAZINE INVESTIGATION: "The Environmental Scandal in Scott Pruitt's Backyard: It's one of the dirtiest places in America. Former residents of Tar Creek, Oklahoma, want to know why Trump's EPA chief didn't prosecute allegations of wrongdoing during a federal buyout program," by Malcolm Burnley in Picher, Oklahoma: "Tar Creek, Oklahoma, is breathtaking in a terrible way: At one time the world's deepest source of lead and zinc, the three-town region is now a cratered landscape so poisonous that no one, aside from 10 holdouts, can live there. Mountains of ashlike 'chat,' a toxic residue from lead-zinc milling, rise majestically among the remains of homes torn from their foundations. Abandoned pets forage around the ruins. A child's teddy bear lies sprawled in a ghostly living room. A gorilla statue fronts an empty high school, atop a sign proclaiming '1A Football State Champs, 1984.'

"Tar Creek is also part of the environmental legacy of one of the state's-and nation's-leading politicians, Senator Jim Inhofe, and his longtime ally, Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who is now head of President Donald Trump's [EPA]. After the EPA struggled to clean up the area, in 2006, Inhofe endorsed a plan in which a trust overseen by local citizens would use federal dollars to purchase homes and businesses in the toxic region so residents could move elsewhere. Then, when the plan proved so problematic that it spawned more than a half-dozen civil lawsuits and an audit into possible criminal wrongdoing, Pruitt, as the state's attorney general, invoked an exception to state freedom-of-information laws to keep the audit from being an open public record.

"Now, that decision is coming into new light as many Oklahomans clamor for the audit to be released, suggesting that its revelations will prove embarrassing to Inhofe, who played a key role in designing the buyout plan, and cast doubt on Pruitt's decision not to move forward with charges." <http://politi.co/2kuwKFw>

ATTN. DETROIT -- "John Conyers III was arrested for domestic abuse but not prosecuted," by NBC News' Andrew Blankstein in LA: "John Conyers III, a Detroit hedge fund manager named as a possible successor to his scandal-rocked father, Rep. John Conyers, was arrested in Los Angeles this year on suspicion of domestic violence, but prosecutors declined to charge him, according to documents obtained by NBC

News. ... Conyers III, 27, was arrested on Feb. 15 at a Los Angeles residence on suspicion of violence against his girlfriend after the alleged victim called police. ... The girlfriend said that Conyers III suspected her of cheating after he went through her computer. She told police that he 'body slammed her on the bed and then on the floor where he pinned her down and spit on her,' the report says." <http://nbcnews.to/2zUliWp>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "N. Korea says war is inevitable as allies continue war games," by AP's Kim Tong-Hyung in Seoul, South Korea: "North Korea says a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula has become a matter of when, not if, as it continued to lash out at a massive joint military exercise between the United States and South Korea involving hundreds of advanced warplanes. In comments attributed to an unnamed Foreign Ministry spokesman, North Korea also claimed high-ranked U.S. officials, including CIA Director Mike Pompeo, have further confirmed American intent for war with a series of 'bellicose remarks.'" <http://bit.ly/2iznFXy>

JARED WATCH -- "Kushner bets he can have it both ways on Jerusalem move," by Annie Karni: "Jared Kushner is betting the house on a risky strategy that Middle East experts worry will derail any future Israeli-Palestinian peace deal - as well as what remains of the powerful son-in-law's shrinking West Wing portfolio. He privately encouraged President Donald Trump's announcement Wednesday that 'Jerusalem is Israel's capital,' which was seen by some experts in the region as a setback for peace efforts led by Kushner and his small team.

"The group has made dozens of trips to the region and spent hours on listening tours, working to gain the trust of the Palestinians and the broader Arab world. 'It is very, very hard to imagine how that peace effort can be continued,' said Ghaith al-Omari, who served as an adviser to the Palestinian Authority's negotiating team from 1999 to 2002. 'All the Arab leaders who have been cultivating relations with the new administration will be forced to come out very strongly against this.' But a person close to Kushner said he was forceful in his backing of the move. 'Encouraging would be an understatement,' the person said. 'It was him.'" <http://politi.co/2k3bEdr>

THE BACK STORY -- "Inside the demise of Al Franken," by Elana Schor and Seung Min Kim: "Al Franken weathered six women's sexual misconduct allegations without hearing a single resignation call from his fellow Democratic senators. No. 7 broke the dam. The Democratic women of the Senate had been talking among themselves about the Franken allegations for weeks, one Democratic aide said. None, however, went further than to call for a Senate Ethics Committee probe of the Minnesota senator, who many of them had considered a close friend.

"That stance became increasingly untenable as the accusations against Franken piled up. In calls and texts, the female senators eventually came to an unstated agreement, according to another aide familiar with their discussions: The next credible story of misconduct in a credible news outlet would prompt them to call for Franken's resignation. When POLITICO reported Wednesday that a former Democratic congressional aide said Franken tried to forcibly kiss her in 2006, the aide said, it 'was

the tipping point.'

"The first public resignation nudge came from Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), a champion for reform of Capitol Hill's sexual harassment policy who one day earlier publicly declined to push Franken. Six more Senate Democratic women followed, with head-snapping speed. 'I think many people have been talking about this for some time. And we all responded with what we had been feeling today,' Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) said after she said Franken should step aside. 'It wasn't coordinated, it just happened.'" <http://politi.co/2iXZ2bb>

THE REPLACEMENT -- "Female lieutenant governor expected to replace Franken if he resigns," by Maggie Severns: "Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton is expected to appoint his lieutenant governor and close ally, Tina Smith, to Al Franken's seat if the Democratic senator resigns on Thursday, three people familiar with the Democratic governor's thinking said. But that appointment would be just the start of a huge upheaval in Minnesota.

"Part of the reason Smith could be heading to the Senate, the sources said, is because she has indicated no interest in running for Congress in the past and would not run for the remainder of Franken's term, which expires in 2020, in a 2018 special election. That would clear the way for a wide-open Democratic primary next year if Franken steps down." <http://politi.co/2BQf7UM>

FIRST PERSON - TINA DUPUY in The Atlantic, "I Believe Franken's Accusers Because He Groped Me, Too: The Democratic Party needs to stand with women who have been harassed-and not defend the politicians who abused them." <http://theatlantic.com/2iZhZu9>

RUSSIA WATCH -- "Trump Jr. cites attorney-client privilege in not answering panel's questions about discussions with his father," by Kyle Cheney: "Donald Trump Jr. on Wednesday cited attorney-client privilege to avoid telling lawmakers about a conversation he had with his father, President Donald Trump, after news broke this summer that the younger Trump - and top campaign brass - had met with Russia-connected individuals in Trump Tower during the 2016 campaign.

"Though neither Trump Jr. nor the president is an attorney, Trump Jr. told the House Intelligence Committee that there was a lawyer in the room during the discussion, according to the committee's top Democrat, Rep. Adam Schiff of California. Schiff said he didn't think it was a legitimate invocation of attorney-client privilege. 'I don't believe you can shield communications between individuals merely by having an attorney present,' he said, after the committee's lengthy interview with Trump Jr. 'That's not the purpose of attorney-client privilege.'" <http://politi.co/2kusF43>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- The president is meeting with Republican senators and RNC Chair Ronna Romney McDaniel. He is also signing a proclamation for National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. In the afternoon he will meet with congressional leaders

and former Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton. He and the First Lady will also host a Hanukkah reception.

THE JUICE...

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK - TOM LOBIANCO**, an AP White House reporter, has signed a deal to write a book on Vice President Mike Pence. LoBianco has covered the former governor of Indiana for multiple news organizations, including the AP and the Indianapolis Star, since 2011. The book was sold by Bridget Matzie of Aevitas Creative Management to Julia Cheiffetz of Dey Street Books, an imprint of HarperCollins.

-- **JUSTIN MYERS** has been hired as the CEO of For Our Future and For Our Future Action Fund. For Our Future was founded in 2016, when it ran a \$60 million ground operation to help progressive candidates. He most recently has been SVP at the Pivot Group and is an alum of DCCC, Kay Hagan and the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, where he was ED.

-- **THE WING**, a New York-based women's co-working and social club, held a "welcome" dinner at 1789 last night. It is opening its D.C. outpost in Georgetown early next year. **SPOTTED:** Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Audrey Gelman, Giovanna Lockhart, Dayna Grayson, Alyssa Mastromonaco, Edith Gregson, Juleanna Glover, Kasie Hunt, Kristen Welker, Annie Karni, Pia Carusone, Susan Tynan, Tammy Haddad and Katie Glueck.

FUN VIDEO -- @TheDailyShow: "Trump's Best Words of 2017" - **1-min. video**
<http://bit.ly/2kvGTSS> (h/t Matt Negrin)

HAPPENING TONIGHT -- Our first live podcast taping is **TONIGHT** at 7 p.m. at Sixth and I. Our inaugural guests: **MICHAEL BARBARO**, host of the New York Times' hit podcast "The Daily," **DCCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAN SENA** and **NRCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN ROGERS**. And a panel of **POLITICO** stars: **RACHAEL BADE**, **SEUNG MIN KIM** and **ANNIE KARNI**. Get your tickets now!
<http://bit.ly/2hWK7tF>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A motorist on Highway 101 watches flames from the Thomas fire leap above the roadway north of Ventura, Calif., on Dec. 6. | Noah Berger/AP Photo

THE LATEST ON THE BAN -- "Appeals court considers legality of latest Trump travel ban," by Josh Gerstein: "A federal appeals court gave a somewhat friendlier reception Wednesday to President Donald Trump's latest travel ban order, just two days after the Supreme Court allowed the policy to be implemented in full for the first time. A

three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals met in Seattle to hear arguments over an injunction against varied travel restrictions Trump issued in September on citizens of six majority Muslim countries, as well as North Korea and Venezuela." <http://politi.co/2jm0bWL>

JUST POSTED -- "The surgeon general and his brother: A family's painful reckoning with addiction," by Andrew Joseph in STAT News: <http://bit.ly/2j0ZYvw>

HMM - "VA cuts program for homeless vets after touting Trump's commitment," by Arthur Allen and Lorraine Woellert: "Four days after Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin held a big Washington event to tout the Trump administration's promise to house all homeless vets, the agency did an about-face, telling advocates it was pulling resources from a major housing program. The VA said it was essentially ending a special \$460 million program that has dramatically reduced homelessness among chronically sick and vulnerable veterans.

"Instead, the money would go to local VA hospitals that can use it as they like, as long as they show evidence of dealing with homelessness. Anger exploded on a Dec. 1 call that was arranged by Shulkin's Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans to explain the move. Advocates for veterans, state officials and even officials from HUD, which co-sponsors the program, attacked the decision, according to five people who were on the call." <http://politi.co/2nCuQ6L>

VALLEY TALK -- "Silicon Valley Investor Shervin Pishevar Accused Of Spreading False Information To Cover Up Alleged Sexual Misconduct," by BuzzFeed's Ryan Mac: "Venture capitalist Shervin Pishevar, who has been accused by multiple unnamed women of sexual misconduct in a recent news report, is now being accused by a Republican-affiliated opposition research firm of spreading false information about it in an attempt to cover up his alleged wrongdoings. In a bizarre twist on Wednesday, Definers Public Affairs - which Pishevar is suing for allegedly helping to spread a false police report that accuses him of rape - filed a motion to dismiss the investor's suit in full.

"That motion, made in San Francisco Superior Court, argues that Pishevar's lawsuit should be thrown out under California's anti-Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (anti-SLAPP) law, which was designed to prevent litigation that is simply meant to silence or intimidate critics by burying them under legal costs." <http://bzfd.it/2BH5RI2>

ZACK STANTON in POLITICO Magazine: **"John Conyers Was An Icon. Then He Lost His Way:** It's time to reckon with the legacy of a man who saw so much and stayed too long": <http://politi.co/2B8OgX3>

******* A message from PhRMA :** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers,

pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

DESSERT -- "A history of the final dying days of the power suit," by WaPo's Robin Givhan: "Douglas Heye wears suits. Like a lot of men, he gives a fair amount of consideration to the way those suits are styled. Unlike a lot of men, he is willing and able to break down those considerations into specifics. 'I like a pocket square, but I generally don't wear one with a tie,' says Heye, a former Republican strategist, now a CNN contributor. 'If I'm wearing a tie, three out of four times it's blue. I like blue and I've been told it works for me. ... If I'm wearing a jacket and no tie, I always like a pocket square. I think it's a little bit more dressy. It shows a little bit of effort.'

"Effort is important. The whole reason for wearing the suit, he says, is to set a tone. He recently attended a meeting where he knew everyone else would be casual. But he couldn't bring himself to show up in khakis and a golf shirt. A suit, he reasoned, signaled a certain seriousness. 'But I don't know,' he says. 'Maybe it means something to me and not the viewer.'" <http://wapo.st/2Akck9h>

MEDIAWATCH -- "ABC reprimands producer for giving data to Trump campaign," by Michael Calderone: "In their new book 'Let Trump Be Trump,' campaign insiders Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie wrote that Chris Vlasto -- then-executive producer of 'Good Morning America' and now senior executive producer for investigative reporting -- called Bossie, Trump's deputy campaign manager, at 5:01 p.m. on election night with information being shared within a consortium of the Associated Press and the major TV networks. ...

"Bossie had known Vlasto for decades, going back to when Bossie was a Republican House investigator in the 1990s and Vlasto was covering the Clinton Whitewater investigations, according to the book. Vlasto was considered for a senior communications position in the Trump White House in the weeks after the election before pulling himself out of consideration." <http://politi.co/2BayJWQ>

--PER MICHAEL CALDERONE IN MORNING MEDIA: "Doyle McManus is taking a buyout from the Los Angeles Times after 39 years with the paper. He said in a note to friends that he'll write occasional op-ed columns for the paper as a contributing writer, and that he plans to do more long-form pieces -- and possibly a book."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Donald Rumsfeld in Farragut Square yesterday after getting a haircut

SPOTTED at the annual American Defense International holiday party at the Hotel George hosted by defense lobbyists Van Hipp and Michael Herson: Rick Harrison, star of History Channel's "Pawn Stars," Ed Nixon, brother of former President Richard Nixon,

former Virginia Governor, RNC Chair and presidential candidate Jim Gilmore, Reps. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-Fla.), Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Adam Smith (D-Wash.), Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), Jim Banks (R-Ind.), Scott Taylor (R-Va.), Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), Pete Visclosky (D-Ind.), Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.), Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), Charlie Crist (D-Fla.), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), and Mike Turner (R-Ohio).

TRANSITIONS -- "Cruz chief of staff leaves Capitol Hill," by Seung Min Kim: "Sen. Ted Cruz's chief of staff is leaving Capitol Hill after more than a year leading the Texas Republican's congressional operation in Washington and in his home state. David Polyansky, 46, came on board as Cruz's chief of staff following the Republican National Convention in 2016 at a time when the senator re-focused his energies on Texas following his unsuccessful presidential campaign.

"Now, Polyansky is returning to Houston, where his family resides, and staying on as a senior adviser for Cruz's re-election campaign in 2018. ... Pre Shah, currently Cruz's chief counsel, will take over for Polyansky as the senator's chief of staff. Cruz's legislative director, Steve Chartan, will become deputy chief of staff while keeping his legislative duties." <http://politi.co/2AyC0Ou>

-- **SPOTTED:** Cruz, Polyansky and Scott Reed in a booth at Capital Grille last night - also seen there: Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) chatting with Arkansas Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) and Rep. Roger Williams (R-Texas) were also at the restaurant.

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Suhail Khan, Microsoft director of external affairs. **A fun fact about Suhail:** "I was a nanny in college, have ridden a '61 Harley Davidson since high school and am currently restoring a '67 Shelby Mustang GT500. I was also front row for Metallica three times this summer." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2AzrXss>

BIRTHDAYS: Carole Simpson is 76 ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) is 65 ... Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) is 8-0 ... CNN's Ashley Killough (hat tip: Kevin Cirilli) ... Emily Hamilton, director at Hamilton Place Strategies ... Kate Tummarello, policy analyst at Electronic Frontier Foundation ... Allie Grasgreen Ciaramella, comms manager at the National College Access Network ... Nicolás Luis Rosero ... Larisa Alexandrovna Horton ... Oath's Sarindee Wickramasuriya ... former Amb. Michael Punke, VP of global public policy for Amazon Web Services and author of "The Revenant" ... Scott Greene ... Kenny Fried ... Patrick Lee Plaisance is 54 ... Molly Block, newly-hired press secretary at EPA ... Ben Fallon ... Maria Fuentes ... Jeannie Lough ... Doug Henwood ... Dafna Tapiero ... Adam Culbertson ... Michael Steinhardt is 77 ... Jonathan Tisch is 64 ... Edelman's Erika Reyes ... NYT's Dean Chang ...

... **Priya Dayananda** of KPMG ... Anne MacMillan of Invariant ... Sam Runyon, deputy press secretary for Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), celebrating over three days (h/t Jonathan Kott) ... Christina Freundlich ... Olivia Wenk (h/t Dad, Christopher) ... Tyler Prell ... Robert Cresanti, pres. and CEO of Int'l Franchise Association ... Mary Heitman,

EVP at IFA ... Illinois State Sen. Dan McConchie ... Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) is 41 (h/t Robb Watters) ... Tom Frieden ... Mike Klein ... Deloitte's Sam Schofield, a State alum (h/t Nihal Krishan, "his fellow Fessenden Fiefdom housemate") ... Jenny Kordick ... Amanda Faulkner, public policy and government relations at Google (h/t Ben Khouri) ... Lisa Sun ... Raj Peter Bhakta ... Tim Andrews ... Kim Bradford ... Peter Truell is 62 ... Brian Mosteller ... Mike Meece ... Cristina Beato ... Noam Chomsky is 89 ... Alice Parker ... Ruthanne Buck ... Sachin Chheda ... Antha Williams ... Jeff Blum (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

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From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 5/11/2017 8:28:52 PM
Subject: DRAFT: Our Weekly Recap For Tomorrow Morning
05.12.17 - Weekly Recap.docx

Below and attached is a document that you might want to include in the Administrator's book. Our goal is to send this document out tomorrow morning.

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. *"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009."*

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no 'environmental savior,' and his administration accomplished nothing. *"Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration's attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama's tenure."*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *"Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last*

eight years. 'What's so great about that record,' he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. 'I don't quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.'"

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued Obama's EPA because they exceeded their statutory authority. *"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because 'they exceeded their statutory authority.' 'They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.'"*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after Flint, Obama's EPA does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *"Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA's failure to fix Flint's water system."*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors. *"The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I'm sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it's the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board."*

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. *"Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on "cooperative federalism" and working with the states."*

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. *"[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues."*

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. *"Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota's ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery."*

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. *"If you go back to the inception of the agency... Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,' EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. 'The past administration simply disregarded that,' he continued."*

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. “Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state’s relationship with that federal agency. ‘The days of coercive federalism are over,’ new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum.”

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule.”

Oklahoma City’s KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. “The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... ‘Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump administration,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma’s attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump’s administration.”

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The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued Obama's EPA because they exceeded their statutory authority. *"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because 'they exceeded their statutory authority.' 'They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.'"*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after Flint, Obama's EPA does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *"Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA's failure to fix Flint's water system."*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors. *"The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will*

apply, I'm sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it's the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board."

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. "Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on "cooperative federalism" and working with the states."

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. "[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues."

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. "Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota's ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery."

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. "'If you go back to the inception of the agency...Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,' EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. 'The past administration simply disregarded that,' he continued."

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. "Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state's relationship with that federal agency. 'The days of coercive federalism are over,' new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum."

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule."

Oklahoma City's KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. "The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... 'Improving the Nation's water is one of EPA's highest priorities under the Trump administration,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma's attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump's administration."

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:43:29 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Freire, JP
Sent: Thur 4/27/2017 7:52:53 PM
Subject: RE: DRAFT ...

Weird.



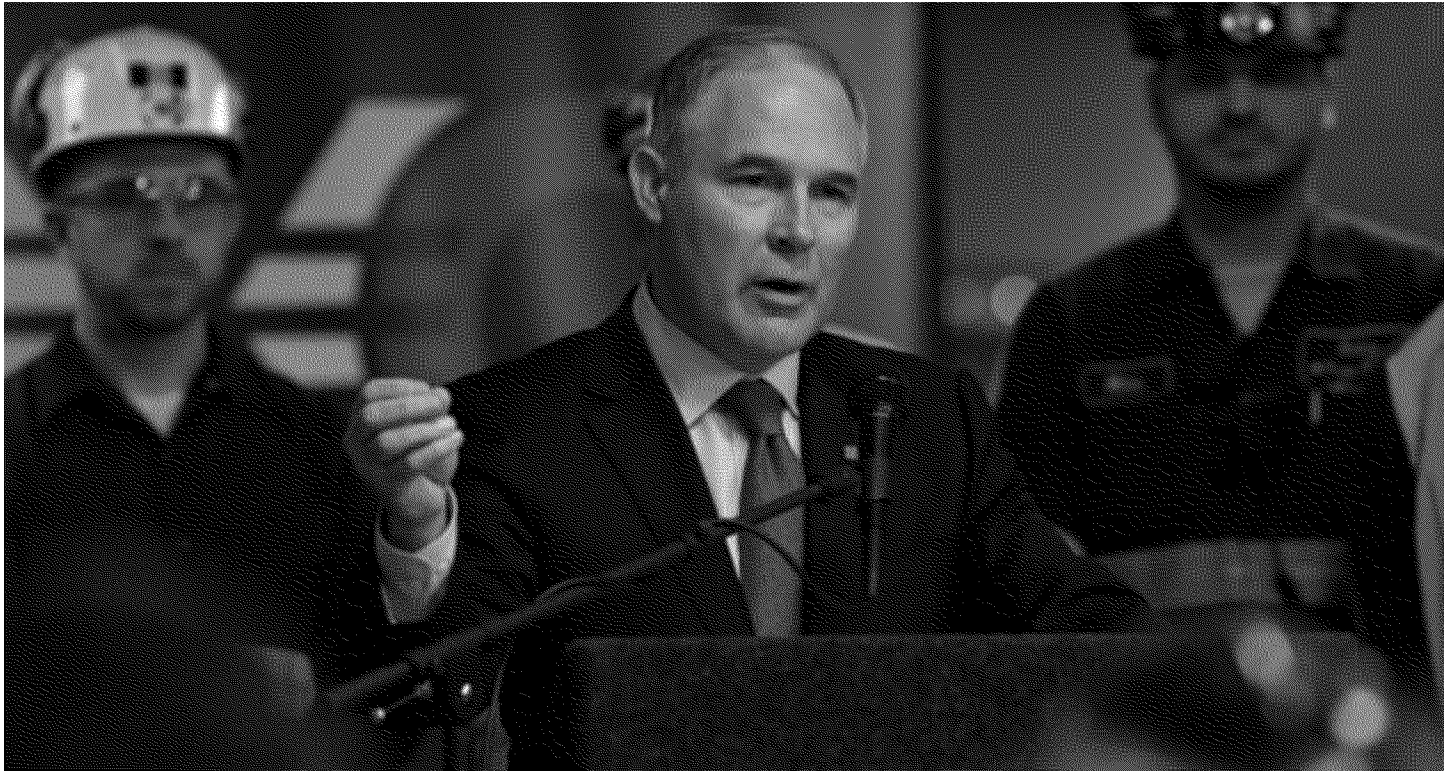
This site is restricted to conserve EPA network resources for business activities.

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 3:52 PM
To: Freire, JP <Freire.JP@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: DRAFT ...

I know huge -- <http://ntknetwork.com/how-scott-pruitt-is-reshaping-the-epa-in-the-first-100-days/>

How Scott Pruitt is Reshaping the EPA in the First 100 Days

In a short amount of time, Pruitt has reversed Obama-era regulations and begun serious cleanup efforts across the country...



April 27, 2017

3:00 pm

As President Trump approaches his first 100 days in office, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is busy racking up accomplishments that both protect Americans and save millions in taxpayer dollars.

Confirmed on February 17, Pruitt has moved quickly on a number of fronts, including:

EPA awarded \$100 million to upgrade drinking water in Flint, Michigan

Pruitt visited lead-contaminated areas in East Chicago and met with local leaders about the cleanup efforts there.

EPA announced it would begin the second phase of the \$43 million cleanup of Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, an area contaminated by mercury and lead.

Trump's executive order returned to the states the role of regulating water by rescinding a 2015 Obama executive order.

Trump also issued an executive order promoting energy independence and economic growth.

To date, President Trump has signed four energy-related resolutions that eliminate Obama-era rules and put in place necessary staff to carry out his policies. In a recent *New York Post* editorial, the board praised Pruitt's efforts:

Yes, Pruitt, like the president who appointed him, is determined to end Obama-era excesses, such as the all-pain, trivial-gain Clean Power Plan and the overreaching "Waters of the United States" rule that claimed the right to regulate even puddles.

Instead, the new administrator aims to focus the agency on actually finishing work it's been neglecting. That includes bringing more of the nation into full attainment of clean air and clean water standards. And also actually getting Superfund sites cleaned up — when many have been stalled for decades.

From: Jeff Bechdel [mailto:jbechdel@ntknetwork.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 3:41 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: DRAFT ...

We pulled a post together, based on some of this info and other stories out there. Let me know if you have any questions: <http://ntknetwork.com/how-scott-pruitt-is-reshaping-the-epa-in-the-first-100-days/>

On Thu, Apr 27, 2017 at 1:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Also below are a few additional bullets ...

GEARING UP FOR DAY 100: Energy and environmental issues offer perhaps the most concrete accomplishments for President Donald Trump to point to as he nears the 100-day mark of his presidency. He's signed four energy-related resolutions wiping out Obama-era rules, put in place Cabinet officials dedicated to rolling back other regulations and unleashed a steady stream of executive orders and photo ops designed to reach his promise of U.S. energy independence. But whether any of this turns into a lasting legacy for Trump largely depends on what happens from here. His Cabinet lacks the political staff to follow up on his efforts undo rules like EPA's Clean Power Plan and Waters of the U.S., and there will be years of litigation over every move undoing regulations on the books. And his actions appear to have awoken scores of citizens opposed to his environmental deregulatory agenda (see below). More to come on this front as we near the actual date later this week. (Politico's Morning Energy, 04/24/17)

An executive order was issued to rescind WOTUS. “President Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued an executive order to rescind or revise the 2015 Clean Water Rule: Definition of ‘Waters of the United States.’” ([Press Release](#), 02/28/17)

An executive order was issued to rescind the so-called Clean Power Plan. “Today, at the Environmental Protection Agency surrounded by American energy workers, public employees and members of Congress, President Donald Trump signed the Energy Independence Executive Order to protect thousands of jobs and strengthen energy security, while also ensuring that our policies provide clean air and clean water for all of our citizens.” ([Press Release](#), 03/28/17)

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt toured lead-contaminated areas in East Chicago. “During Pruitt's visit, his first to a Superfund site since being appointed administrator, he toured the Calumet neighborhood, met with local, state and federal officials, and talked with residents and community members about how the lead and arsenic contamination has affected their lives. ‘The reason I'm here is that it's important that we restore confidence to people here in this community that we're going to get it right,’ Pruitt said. The EPA's objective is to come in and make sure people's health is protected, and that their land and health are secure in the long run, Pruitt said. ‘We're committed to doing that,’ Pruitt said.” ([Chicago Tribune](#), 04/19/17)

The NAACP praised Pruitt for visiting the East Chicago Superfund Site and said they are cautiously optimistic about the EPA's Administrator. “It was the first superfund site EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has visited -- making a trip there Wednesday -- and the agency said he was the first administrator to visit this particular site. Pruitt visited "to discuss cleanup and hear directly from East Chicago residents affected by contamination in their community," the agency said in a press release. At a press conference, local officials praised Pruitt for visiting the site ... Barbara Bolling-Williams, state president of the Indiana branch of the NAACP, said she is cautiously optimistic following Pruitt's visit.” ([CNN](#), 04/19/17)

EPA awarded \$100 million to upgrade drinking water in Flint, Michigan. “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today awarded a \$100 million grant to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to fund drinking water infrastructure upgrades in Flint, Mich.” ([Press Release](#), 03/17/17)

EPA committed additional funds surround the Gold King Mine release, bringing the total to \$29 million. “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has provided over \$90,000 in additional reimbursements to five entities in Colorado and Utah for their costs incurred responding to the August 5, 2015, Gold King Mine release.” ([Press Release](#), 03/16/17)

EPA to reexamine emission standards for cars and light duty trucks. “‘These standards are costly for automakers and the American people,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘We will work with our partners at DOT to take a fresh look to determine if this approach is realistic. This thorough review will help ensure that this national program is good for

consumers and good for the environment.” ([Press Release](#), 03/15/17)

EPA Administrator seeks additional time to review RMP Rule. “Administrator Scott Pruitt signed a proposed rule this week to further delay the effective date of EPA’s Risk Management Program (RMP) Amendments to allow EPA time to complete the process for reconsidering the RMP Amendments issued on January 17, 2017.” ([Press Release](#), 03/31/17)

EPA extended the comment period on the Hard Rock Mining proposed rule that could cost businesses \$171 million annually. “The Environmental Protection Agency today issued a 120-day extension of the comment period related to proposed financial responsibility requirements for the hard rock mining industry. The Agency has received dozens of requests to extend the comment period. EPA estimates predict the implementation of these requirements would cost American businesses up to \$171 million a year.” ([Press Release](#), 02/24/17)

The EPA kicks-off cleanup at the West Oakland Superfund site. “[The EPA] joined local leaders and community members in Oakland to celebrate the installation and start-up of a new groundwater and soil treatment system at the AMCO Chemical Superfund Site.” ([Press Release](#), 03/18/17)

The EPA will resume cleanup at the East Chicago Superfund site. “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing to resume cleanup work in zones 2 and 3 of the USS Lead Superfund site in East Chicago in April. EPA has reached an agreement with several potentially responsible parties to fund part of this work valued at an estimated \$16 million -- in addition to the \$26 million already secured for work under a 2014 consent decree.” ([Press Release](#), 03/20/17)

EPA set to oversee second phase of \$43 million cleanup of Pompton Lake. “The second phase of Pompton Lake cleanup will begin this spring and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is holding a public session to discuss that work.” ([Press Release](#), 03/28/17)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 1:20 PM

To: 'jbechdel@ntknetwork.com' <jbechdel@ntknetwork.com>

Subject: DRAFT ...

Dear Mr. Bechdel –

My name is Jahan Wilcox and I work at the EPA. With the 100 Days of the Trump Administration coming up, we were curious if Need To Know (NTK) news would like to report on the accomplishments of Scott Pruitt and the EPA?

EPA IN ACTION: ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH PRUITT'S LEADERSHIP

- ✓ **TSCA Implementation:** Clearing the backlog of new chemicals that were waiting for approval from EPA, so they can go to market, and companies can create jobs and continue to innovate.
- ✓ **New Source Performance Standards:** Reviewing the New Source Performance Standards for coal-fired power plants, which prevents companies from building new plants.
- ✓ **Oil and Gas Methane NSPS:** EPA announced a decision to reconsider the Oil and Gas Methane New Source Performance Standards for new and modified sources, delaying a costly compliance requirement.
- ✓ **CPP:** Reviewing the so-called Clean Power Plan that threatens over 125,000 U.S. jobs.
- ✓ **Ozone Standard:** Requested delay of oral arguments on the ozone standard.
- ✓ **ELG Rule:** EPA announced the agency's decision to review and reconsider the final rule that amends the effluent limitations guidelines and standards for the steam electric power generating category under the Clean Water Act (ELG Rule), which costs an estimated \$480 million annually, and about \$1.2 billion per year in the first five years of compliance.
- ✓ **Hard Rock Mining:** EPA extended the comment period on the Hard Rock Mining proposed rule that could cost American businesses \$171 million annually.
- ✓ **Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR Rule):** EPA expects provide draft guidance to the states on the CCR rule at the end of the month and begin acting on state permit applications this year. CCR rule is estimated to cost power plants between \$500 and \$745 million – per year.
- ✓ **Energy Independence EO:** Following the President's Energy Independence Executive Order, Administrator Pruitt signed three notices to review and, if appropriate, to revise or rescind major, economically significant, burdensome rules the last Administration issued.
- ✓ **CAFE Standards:** EPA rescinded an unjustified, premature evaluation of greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards for model year 2022-2025 vehicles, and is working with DOT to conduct a collaborative and robust review of the standards. According to the Auto Alliance, "no agency has ever set emission limits so far into the future," and this puts 1.1

million jobs at risk and cost the industry \$200 billion by 2025 to comply.

✓ **WOTUS:** EPA is restoring states' important role in the regulation of water by reviewing the "Waters of the U.S." or WOTUS. A rule with a regulatory impact analysis of between \$600 million and \$1.2 billion.

✓ **Flint, Michigan:** The Agency is allocating funds for vital environmental projects that go directly to the health of our citizens, such as providing \$100 million to upgrade drinking water infrastructure in Flint, Michigan.

✓ **Chlorpyrifos:** EPA denied a petition from the NRDC and the Pesticide Action Network North America, which was seeking a ban on a pesticides used on 40,000 farms and 50 different crops because there was never enough science to justify the ban.

✓ **Methane ICR:** We are stopping the methane ICR by telling businesses they no longer have this additional bureaucratic burden, with the cost to American businesses attempting to comply exceeding \$42 million.

✓ **Regulatory Reform:** Launched the EPA Regulatory Reform Task Force to undergo extensive reviews of the misaligned regulatory actions from the past administration.

✓ **Risk Management Rule (RMP Rule):** EPA delayed the RMP rule to make sure that any additional regulations actually make chemical facilities safer, without duplicating regulations or opening our country up to dangerous national security threats. EPA estimates the RMP rule to cost \$131.8 million annually, or \$1.3 billion over ten years.

✓ **Superfund Sites:** We are getting real results at cleaning up Superfund sites, including: East Chicago (IN), West Oakland (CA) and Pompton Lake (NJ). First EPA Administrator to visit East Chicago site.

✓ **Water Infrastructure:** Opened the application process for EPA's WIFIA program; a low-risk loan for businesses that will provide \$1 billion in credit to finance over \$2 billion in water infrastructure investments.

✓ **Meetings with National/International Leaders:** EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has consulted 22 bipartisan governors, 10 bipartisan members of congress, three foreign leaders, four state agriculture departments, and over a dozen bipartisan organizations.

✓ **EPA Originalism:** EPA Administrator Pruitt launched a *Back-to-Basics* agenda, touring a Pennsylvania coal mine, a Missouri power plant, and visiting a contaminated "Superfund" site in E. Chicago, to discuss how EPA is refocusing the agency on its core mission of protecting the environment through sensible regulations developed in cooperation with state, local and tribal partners.

✓ **MATS Rule:** Given the broad-reaching economic implications of the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule (MATS rule), we are reviewing the costs of the rule to determine whether it

complies with our statutory mandate, abides by sound regulatory principles, and is in line with the pro-jobs, pro-growth directives of this Administration.

✓ **Clean Air Act/SSM SIP:** Asked the court to postpone oral arguments over an Obama-era rule making 36 states rework their Clean Air Act compliance plans, or the Start-up, Shutdown and Malfunction (SSM) Emissions requirements set by State Implementation Plans (SIP) issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act and subject to EPA's federal oversight.

EPA ACCOMPLISHMENTS: THE DETAILS

TSCA Reform Implementation: Clearing out the backlog of 'new chemical' pre-manufacture notices (PMNs) that were waiting for EPA approval. Keeps U.S. at the top of chemical innovation

- PMNs awaiting a decision by EPA date back to 2015 – well beyond the basic 90-day review period required by the law.
- The American Chemistry Council (ACC) said they need new chemicals to be approved quickly so they can “offer new product formulations to help U.S. businesses compete and win globally.”
- ACC estimates that innovation contributes to 0.19 percentage points to the overall long-term growth rate in real GDP. A one-tenth acceleration in the growth of the stock of chemistry innovation, could result in real GDP being \$60.6 billion higher in four years, supporting about 250,000 jobs.

NSPS: EPA is reviewing the New Source Performance Standards for Coal-Fired Power Plants.

- Industry and states challenged the legality of NSPS targeting the EPA's assumptions about carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology
- Challengers argue that NSPS makes it nearly impossible to build a new coal-fired power plant without CCS technology, restraining the industry from adding jobs and growth.
- The American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) applauded action to revise burdensome regulations that undermine the competitiveness of U.S. steel manufacturers. AISI said that regulations such as NSPS “disproportionately impact coal-generated electricity have put the affordability and reliability of electricity for steel producers at risk.”

EPA is also reviewing the Oil and Gas Methane New Source Performance Standards for new and modified sources. Some argue that this rule is wholly unnecessary due to industry reductions in methane and is duplicative of state regulations.

- A notice of review was signed the same day as the Energy Independence Executive Order.
- As a follow-up, EPA issued a notice of reconsideration of the Rule and a delay of costly compliance deadlines to prevent unnecessary expenditures by the industry as the agency considers the rule.
- According to the American Petroleum Institute, the standards would affect “tens of thousands” of new wells each year, and cost up to \$800 million to comply.

Energy Independence Executive Order. Administrator Pruitt signed three notices to pull back and review major, economically significant, burdensome rules the last Administration issued, including: the Clean Power Plan the greenhouse gas rule for new power plants, and an rule to curb methane emissions from oil and gas producers. The Administrator also withdrew the proposed federal implementation plan and model trading rule associated with the Clean Power Plan.

- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell penned an op-ed in Fox News praising President Trump's energy executive order that will restore sanity after Obama's failed climate policies.** “I commend President Trump for sending this flawed regulatory plan, along with a number of others, back to the drawing board with Tuesday’s Energy Independence Executive Order.”
- **In New York, the editorial board at the New York Post writes that Trump’s executive order will help restore our constitutional system.** “Trump’s move not only helps the economy and delivers on a promise, it also takes a step toward restoring America’s constitutional system, in which Congress passes laws — not a dictatorial president.”

CPP: An executive order was issued to review the so-called Clean Power Plan and EPA sent letters to governors with additional guidance on implementing CPP: former President Obama's most disingenuous environmental initiative and the key component of his agenda regarding climate change.

- The CPP cost \$292 billion to our nation's economy over 10 years and double-digit electricity price increase in 40 states, yet will have no impact on climate change.

- CPP kills over 125,000 American jobs.
- Using the Obama EPA's own data, CPP results in less than 0.2% reduction in CO2 worldwide and will only prevent sea level rise that is equivalent to the thickness of two sheets of paper.
- The National Mining Association (NMA) placed 51 op-eds in 17 states, and conducted about 18 radio interviews in support of the Energy Independence Order.

Requested Delay of Oral Arguments on 2015 Ozone Standards: Justice Department attorneys asked the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to delay oral arguments scheduled for later this month in a lawsuit challenging the rule while the EPA reviews the regulation.

- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce says that this rule results in stymied economic development and lost job creation.
- The Chamber says that extending the deadline for implementing the 2015 Ozone Standards would be the most effective way to address implementation problems and would provide immediate relief to businesses, state and localities.

EPA announced the agency's decision to review and reconsider the final rule that amends the effluent limitations guidelines and standards for the steam electric power generating category under the Clean Water Act (ELG Rule).

- EPA estimates the ELG rule costs an estimated \$480 million annually, with an average cost of \$1.2 billion per year during the first five years of compliance.
- This is one of the most consequential rules affecting power plants and risks putting coal companies out of business.
- According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association these standards would especially burden small and medium sized power plants, and the cost of compliance has been significantly underestimated.

Mining Financial Assurance Rule: EPA extended the comment period on the Hard Rock Mining proposed rule that costs American businesses \$171 million annually.

- Following dozens of requests, EPA issued a 120-day extension of the comment period related to proposed financial responsibility requirements for the hard rock mining industry.
- According to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the rule could require billions of dollars of additional financial assurances for miners of things like gold, silver, iron and copper—critical materials for countless manufactured products. They say this represents billions of dollars that cannot be used for R&D or for economic growth and new jobs.
- Three House committee chairs sent a letter requesting the extended comment period to provide more time to digest the rule given that it contains more than 2,300 technical documents and, the chairs argued, was crafted with no input from states, industry experts or stakeholders.

CCR (*Coal Combustion Residuals*): EPA expects to issue the draft guidance to the states at the end of the month and begin acting on state permit applications this year.

- EPA estimates the cost of the CCR rule to be between \$500 and \$745 million annually.
- Leading Senators on the Environment and Public Works Committee have applauded states having their own permitting programs for recycling and reusing coal ash. This provides “needed certainty to industry and businesses, while ensuring the health and safety of families and communities,” according to Senator Shelley Moore Capito R-W.Va.

EPA rescinded a premature evaluation of greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards for model year 2022-2025 vehicles, and is working with DOT to conduct a collaborative and robust review of the standards.

- These standards are costly for automakers and the American people. This thorough review will help ensure that this national program is good for consumers and good for the environment.
- U.S. Rep Joe Barton (R-Texas) said, “You can make a good intellectual case to repeal CAFE and let the market handle it. If Mr. Trump is president...we’ll be back.” And Committee Chairman Fred Upton, R-Mich., said “If done wrong,” the 2025 standards will hurt consumers and carmakers “big time.”
- According to the Auto Alliance, “no agency has ever set emission limits so far into the future,” and this puts 1.1 million jobs at risk and cost the industry \$200 billion by 2025 to comply.

EPA is restoring states' important role in the regulation of water by reviewing, and if appropriate, revising or rescinding WOTUS.

- The Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) for WOTUS is anywhere between \$600 million and \$1.2 billion.
- The American Farm Bureau Federation says this action will help provide transparency for America's farmers and ranchers.
- EPA will propose as a first step to withdraw the WOTUS rule, reverting as an interim measure to familiar 2008 guidance (which represents the *status quo* due to the court stay of WOTUS). EPA will then, in the second step of this two-step process, promulgate a replacement rule. EPA has recently begun federalism/stakeholder outreach to explain this process to the public, states, trade groups, and other organizations.

EPA is making decisions based on public data and science by denying a petition to ban the pesticide chlorpyrifos.

- EPA denied a petition from the NRDC and the Pesticide Action Network North America, which was asking EPA to ban one of the most widely-used pesticides in the world because there was never enough science to justify the ban.
- Chlorpyrifos is used today at about 40,000 farms on about 50 different types of crops, ranging from almonds to apples.
- USDA said the decision was based on sound science and will provide Americans with access to a full range of fruits and vegetables.

Stopping Methane ICR: The EPA sent 15,000 letters to American energy producers telling them they no longer have to respond a letter that EPA sent back in November 2016 at the direction of the previous EPA Administrator.

- EPA estimated that the cost to American businesses for Pt 1 of the ICR was \$17.9 million and the cost for Pt 2 of the ICR was \$24.5 million, for a total of \$42.4 million. EPA would also have a \$800K annual burden.
- EPA businesses they no longer have this additional bureaucratic burden, so these companies and the public can save money and move closer, faster to capturing any methane from escaping into the air.

Launched EPA Regulatory Reform Task Force: We are undergoing extensive reviews of the misaligned regulatory actions from the past administration.

- Industry groups such as the American Coal Council have applauded the administration's efforts to "restore balance and fairness to the regulatory process, support job creation, strengthen energy independence and lay the foundation for rebuilding and sustaining our nation's vital coal industry."
- Our Regulatory Task Force has scheduled stakeholder meetings and consultations in all major program offices and areas to solicit input on rules that should be revisited or rescinded and those meetings are underway. We have issued a notice soliciting public comment in the Federal Register allowing the general public to weigh in on this process.

Delayed Risk Management Plan (RMP Rule). EPA delayed the RMP rule to ensure that any expansion of the RMP program is necessary to make chemical facilities safer, and doesn't subject facilities to even more burdensome, duplicative and needless regulation.

- RMP rule estimated to cost \$131.8 million annually, or \$1.3 billion over ten years, according to EPA's own estimates in the [Federal Register document](#) (pg. 4597)
- Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, leading a coalition of 11 states, filed a Petition for Reconsideration on the RMP rule, explaining "This ill-advised decision subjects facilities to even more burdensome, duplicative, and needless regulation; but it also makes all of us more vulnerable to security threats."
- According to a petition filed on behalf of the RMP Coalition, consisting of relevant industry groups, this rule undermines safety, creates significant security risks, and does nothing to further prevent criminal acts that threaten facilities.

Getting real results at Superfund sites.

- Kicked-off cleanup at West Oakland (CA) Superfund site; celebrated the start-up and installation of a groundwater and soil treatment system at the AMCO Chemical Superfund site.
- "It is hard to put up with something harmful being there underground, close to your home. It is a relief to know it is going to be gone for good," said Oakland resident Queen Thurston, who was among a group of protestors that staged rallies calling for an investigation into the environmental condition of the area in the 1990s.
- Resuming cleanup and removal of contaminated soil from residences at the East

Chicago (IN) Superfund site. Reached an agreement with several potentially responsible parties to fund part of the work valued at an estimated \$16 million – in addition to the \$26 million already secured for work under a 2014 consent decree. Worked with State of Indiana to provide funding under State Revolving Loan Fund for drinking water upgrades, water filters, and bottled water.

- Overseeing the second phase of \$43 million cleanup of Pompton Lake (NJ).

Allocating funds for vital environmental projects that go directly to the health of our citizens.

- EPA awarded \$100 million to upgrade drinking water in Flint, Michigan.
- Flint Mayor Karen Weaver expressed gratitude for the funding. “The City of Flint being awarded a grant of this magnitude in such a critical time of need will be a huge benefit,” she said.
- Committed additional funds surrounding the Gold King Mine release, bringing the total investment to \$29 million.
- Awarded \$380,000 to Dine College for an abandoned uranium mine study in Arizona.
- Awarded a \$1.09 million Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant to the historic Gees Bend Ferry in Wilcox County, Alabama. Provides partial funding to develop the first zero-emission passenger/vehicle ferry of this type in the U.S., and the second in the world.

Opened the application process for EPA’s WIFIA program; a low-risk loan for businesses that will provide \$1 billion in credit to finance over \$2 billion in water infrastructure investments.

- This program helps private companies and commercial developers update infrastructure and invest in local economies, adding jobs through a public-private partnership.
- The program was so popular, we received 43 letters of interest, seeking \$5.4 billion in credit assistance.
- American Water Works Association members stressed that WIFIA, which makes available low-interest federal loans for large water projects, represents the perfect balance between federal assistance and local responsibility. WIFIA is being funded for the first time in 2017 at a level of \$20M, which can leverage \$1B in loans.

Since sworn in on February 17, Administrator Pruitt has met with 21 bipartisan governors, seven bipartisan Members of Congress, three leaders from other countries and over a dozen bipartisan and nonprofit organizations.

- "Canada and the U.S. can work together on a continental approach to energy and the environment that focuses on technological innovation like CCS and clean coal initiatives without tax and regulatory policies that cost jobs," said Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall.
- "[Administrator Pruitt] clearly understands the EPA's proper role in government – educating and empowering, not proscribing and punishing. It's also refreshing to have a federal agency actually listen to a state's concerns," said Idaho Governor Butch Otter.

EPA Administrator Pruitt launched a *Back-to-Basics* agenda, touring a Pennsylvania coal mine, a Missouri power plant, and visiting a contaminated Superfund site in E. Chicago.

- As first EPA Administrator to visit the USS Lead Superfund site in East Chicago, which was listed on the National Priorities List of the worst contaminated sites in the country in 2009.
- Barbara Bolling-Williams, state president of the Indiana branch of the NAACP, said she is cautiously optimistic following Pruitt's visit to E. Chicago.
- "This is a historic event for the state of Missouri and electric cooperatives. This is the first time that an administrator of the [EPA] has actually come to one of our energy plants in Missouri to view some of the things that we've done as electric cooperatives as far as our environmental stewardship record," says Barry Hart with the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives (AMEC).
- "We welcome Administrator Pruitt to Southwestern Pennsylvania and are very encouraged by the new Administration's commonsense approach in balancing the need for environmental protection, energy development and economic growth," said Jimmy Brock, CEO of CNX Coal Resources.

Given the broad-reaching economic implications of the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule (MATS rule), we are reviewing the costs of the rule to determine whether it is in line with the pro-jobs, pro-growth directives of this Administration.

- States and energy companies will no doubt celebrate the EPA's reviewing of MATS, seeing it as the next step in the Trump administration's plan to cut most federal regulations imposed during the Obama administration ... MATS has probably had the biggest impact on coal-fired power plants of any EPA regulation. A record nearly 14 gigawatts of coal-fired power was shut down in 2015 — the first year MATS went into effect.

- Industry groups such as the National Mining Association have long opposed the rule, saying that it has been responsible for shutting down numerous coal-fired power plants and eliminating jobs. “The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards has already had far-reaching and costly impacts not only on our industry but on many states and their citizens whose assurance of reliable electricity supply has been cast in doubt by this rule,” the group has argued. “EPA’s rule reflects a stunningly unbalanced approach to regulation. The agency decided to impose expensive standards for certain emissions that it never found posed a threat to public health.”

Asked the court to postpone oral arguments over an Obama-era rule making 36 states rework their Clean Air Act compliance plans, or the Start-up, Shutdown and Malfunction (SSM) Emissions requirements set by State Implementation Plans (SIP) issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act and subject to EPA’s federal oversight.

- The 2015 rule, SSM SIP call, made 36 states rewrite their plans to comply with the Clean Air Act, to remove shields for power plants and refineries emitting extra pollutants during startup, shutdown or malfunctions.
- Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi said that the EPA’s final rule is a “heavy-handed federal overreach [that] threatens to upend a system that the EPA has approved multiple times.” She said that the EPA’s “imprudent rush to settle the matter has led the agency to adopt an illegal final rule that is in conflict with the Clean Air Act and imposes on Florida’s right to determine the most effective strategy for achieving air quality standards.”
- In an opening brief, filers said the agency is improperly attempting to expand its authority. The brief was filed by a broad coalition of energy companies, utilities and industry organizations, along with several states and state agencies asking the D.C. Circuit to strike down an Obama-EPA requirement that 36 states revise emissions exemptions related to startup, shutdown and malfunction events.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 12/8/2017 11:33:44 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: BREXIT talks move to phase 2 -- SHUTDOWN AVERTED, problems punted to the end of the month -- TRUMP soaks rich New Yorkers -- INSIDE the White House Hanukkah party -- ZINKE loves helicopters -- B'DAY: Jim Yong Kim

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

POLITICO EUROPE'S CHARLIE COOPER -- "The European Commission recommended to the European Council on Friday that 'sufficient progress' has been made in Brexit talks to allow negotiations to move on to Phase 2, which will cover trade and the U.K.'s future relationship with the EU." <http://politi.co/2AF1dGS> ... ***Read our very scoopy London Playbook, by Jack Blanchard*** <http://politi.co/2yOKLTd>

Good Friday morning. Senate Republicans passed a two-week government funding bill last night avoiding a government shutdown. Now all eyes are on Dec. 22 and whether President Donald Trump and congressional leadership can come to an agreement.

-- **THE TIMELINE:** We hear Republicans want to have their tax bill finished and passed by Dec. 18, 19 or so. That leaves three days to get another government funding bill, which is expected to last sometime into early or mid January. The spending cap deal will also hit the floor that week in December, as well. Aides we talk to are pretty firm that DACA cannot and will not happen this year. But most Republicans seem eager to get that done in early January.

ONE INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT DYNAMIC -- While House Democrats have toiled away in the minority, when it comes to government funding fights they have always been relevant because House Republicans haven't been able to secure enough votes to pass stop-gap funding bills. That changed yesterday. Republicans stood together and passed the two-week bill without the help of Democrats.

WILL IT LAST? -- Doubtful. Conservative Republicans aren't eager to vote for whatever funding bill comes next -- they're already freaking out about the budget cap deal. They

will put up more of a fight when it comes to a massive package to keep government funded through 2018.

THE LATEST ON THE FIRES - "Homes, horses burn in newest California wildfire," by AP's Elliot Spagat and Andrew Dalton in Fallbrook, California: "Retirement communities built on golf courses, semi-rural race horse stables and other usually serene sites were engulfed by flames as the San Diego area became the latest front in California's wildfire fight. The fire broke out Thursday amid dry, hot, windy conditions across the region that would be extreme for any season, but are especially stunning just two weeks from winter. It exceeded 6 square miles (16 square kilometers) in a matter of hours and burned dozens of houses as it tore through the tightly packed Rancho Monserate Country Club community in the small city of Fallbrook, known for its avocado orchards and horse ranches. Three people were burned while escaping the flames." <http://bit.ly/2nl5V1Q>

A1, NYT -- SHANE GOLDMACHER, MAGGIE HABERMAN and KATE KELLY: "On Tax Bill, It's Trump vs. His Hometown": "While Mr. Trump has tried to sell the tax package as a giant tax break for all Americans, a different story is unfolding in New York and other high-tax, mostly Democratic states. The mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, has estimated that there could be tax increases for as many as 700,000 residents if the legislation is approved. Nearly half of households in surrounding suburban counties itemize their deductions -- and stand to lose valuable write-offs of state and local taxes on their federal returns. ...

"It is almost unimaginable that President George W. Bush would have championed a bill that would have harmed Texas relative to other states, or for President Barack Obama to have embraced legislation that took a particular bite out of his birth state, Hawaii, or adopted hometown, Chicago. ...

"Some of the largest hedge-fund managers who operate in New York are also concerned about an element of the proposed legislation that prevents executives in certain financial-services companies from partaking of the new, lower pass-through rate -- even if they are structured as partnerships. Their argument: that their treatment under that bill would drive the taxes for New York-based financial-service partnerships to 50 percent or more, driving business out of New York and into lower-tax states.

"This week, Kenneth C. Griffin, a major political donor and the founder of the hedge-fund company Citadel, which has its headquarters in Chicago but employs hundreds of people in New York, went to Washington to press that case, according to three people with knowledge of the travels. In discussions with lawmakers, Paul Singer, the founder of the hedge fund Elliott Management and one of the Republican Party's most generous donors, made similar concerns known." <http://nyti.ms/2iGGSH8>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- ON THE GROUND IN ISRAEL -- "Israel beefs up Jerusalem police force ahead of protests," by AP's Ilan Ben Zion in Jerusalem: "Israeli police deployed reinforcements in and around Jerusalem's Old City on Friday, in anticipation of

Palestinian protests over the Trump administration's recognition of the contested city as the Israeli capital. Palestinian political groups have called for massive demonstrations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem after Friday prayers, the highlight of the Muslim religious week. Separately, the Gaza-based leader of the Islamic militant Hamas has agitated for a third uprising against Israel." <http://bit.ly/2j68rxn>

CLEANING UP WASHINGTON -- "Zinke booked government helicopters to attend D.C. events," by Ben Lefebvre: "Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke spent more than \$14,000 on government helicopters this summer to take himself and staff to and from official events near Washington, D.C., in order to accommodate his attendance at a swearing-in ceremony for his replacement in Congress and a horseback ride with Vice President Mike Pence, according to previously undisclosed official travel documents.

"In a case detailed in the new documents, Zinke ordered a U.S. Park Police helicopter to take him and his chief of staff, Scott Hommel, to an emergency management exercise in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, on June 21. Zinke's staff justified the \$8,000 flight by saying official business would prevent him leaving Washington before 2 p.m., too late to make the two-hour drive to the exercise, according to the documents. ...

"Zinke also ordered a Park Police helicopter to fly him and another Interior official to and from Yorktown, Virginia, on July 7 in order to be back in Washington in time for a 4 p.m. horseback ride with Pence. The trip cost about \$6,250, according to the documents." <http://politi.co/2BM7yhl>

***** **A message from PhRMA** : A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

SEXUAL HARASSMENT FILES -- "Ethics Committee launches investigation into Farenthold sexual harassment allegations," by Rachael Bade and John Bresnahan: "The House Ethics Committee launched an investigation into Rep. Blake Farenthold over allegations that he sexually harassed a former aide and then retaliated against her when she complained about it. The committee said new evidence in the matter, which was first reviewed in 2015, warranted an investigation. Earlier Thursday, the panel said it was seeking an interview with Lauren Greene, the former aide who says she was sexually harassed by the Texas Republican.

"Greene received an \$84,000, taxpayer-funded settlement after she sued Farenthold in Dec. 2014 over allegations of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment. Even though the Office of Congressional Ethics cleared Farenthold, the Ethics Committee has continued to look into the matter." <http://politi.co/2Be5SRw>

-- **"Texas water board chairman Bech Bruun resigns ahead of likely challenge to U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold,"** by the Texas Tribune's Cassandra Pollock: "Bech Bruun, chairman of the Texas Water Development Board, resigned Thursday from that position ahead of an anticipated bid to unseat U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold, R-Corpus Christi. ... Bruun is expected to file to run as a Republican for Texas' 27th Congressional District as early as Friday." <http://bit.ly/2yOvkKI>

--**SPOTTED:** Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-Texas) at the Chamber of Commerce holiday party yesterday evening. "He seemed like he was having a good time," per our tipster. Another tipster said he was enjoying a corn dog.

-- **THE NEWEST: "Rep. Trent Franks to resign after discussing surrogacy with female staffers,"** by Elena Schneider: "Rep. Trent Franks announced that he would resign from office as of Jan. 31, 2018, after discussing surrogacy issues with female staffers. 'I have recently learned that the Ethics Committee is reviewing an inquiry regarding my discussion of surrogacy with two previous female subordinates, making each feel uncomfortable,' he said in a statement. 'I deeply regret that my discussion of this option and process in the workplace caused distress.'"

"The Arizona Republican's announcement shocked Capitol Hill. Franks has been a vocal social conservative since being elected to Congress in 2002, and has authored numerous anti-abortion legislation. He is married with twins. Franks is the third lawmaker to announce plans to resign this week as the furor over sexual harassment sweeps Capitol Hill. He will be the first Republican to vacate his post amid the growing scandal." <http://politi.co/2yOxMkq> ... **Full text of Franks' resignation letter** <http://bit.ly/2jwJnwn>

INTERESTING VIEWING: Last night on the House floor before Franks' resignation announcement we spotted him having a long conversation with North Carolina Republican Virginia Foxx. At one point she held his hand, appearing to console him. Afterward, Franks huddled with several House Freedom Caucus members, including Reps. Mark Meadows (N.C.), Jim Jordan (Ohio), Louie Gohmert (Texas), Robert Aderholt (Ala.) and Mark Walker (N.C.).

-- **"Sheriff Joe Arpaio Not Interested in Trent Franks' Seat-but 'Seriously, Seriously, Seriously' Considering the U.S. Senate,"** by Scott Bixby in the Daily Beast: "Former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio has no interest in running for Rep. Trent Franks' (R-AZ) soon-to-be vacated seat, he said on Thursday. Instead, the controversial lawman, who was recently pardoned by President Donald Trump, has his sights on a higher office. 'I am seriously, seriously, seriously considering running for the U.S. Senate,' Arpaio told The Daily Beast, 'not the congressman's seat.'" <http://thebea.st/2j9V538>

-- **"Democrat Kihuen hanging on despite harassment claim,"** by Heather Caygle: "House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi won't call for a primary challenger to take on Nevada Rep. Ruben Kihuen, despite saying the freshman Democrat should resign due

to sexual harassment allegations. 'This is not about politics. That's the last thing this is about,' Pelosi (D-Calif.) said Thursday in response to questions about Kihuen, who has refused demands from party leaders to step down.

"The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee did not respond to requests for comment on whether it would fund a primary challenger against Kihuen. The campaign arm has, however, removed Kihuen from its 'frontline' program, which prioritizes funding for vulnerable members. But beyond those steps, Pelosi and other Democratic leaders have not maneuvered to force Kihuen out as they did with Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), who resigned Tuesday after a concerted behind-the-scenes effort. That could change, Democratic aides say, if more allegations crop up. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus is also divided on how to handle the issue."

<http://politi.co/2AotfYw>

-- HUFFPOST'S YASHAR ALI: "Former Congressman Harold Ford Jr. Fired For Misconduct By Morgan Stanley": <http://bit.ly/2BJPCnm> ***MSNBC is pulling Ford Jr. from programming as it investigates the allegations, which Ford denies. He's threatening to sue Morgan Stanley and the accuser.***

POLITICO MAGAZINE FRIDAY COVER - "Kirsten Gillibrand's Moment Has Arrived: The New York senator has made sexual assault the focus of her political career. Now, the world has caught up with her," by David Freedlander:

<http://politi.co/2Ao1Tle>

ONE DOWN -- "Ethics Committee clears Rep. Devin Nunes," by Elana Schor: "The House Ethics Committee on Thursday cleared Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, of allegations that he disclosed classified information earlier this year. Nunes was forced to step aside from the helm of the committee's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election, including alleged collusion with President Donald Trump's allies, in the wake of his March statement that members of the Trump transition team had their communications legally monitored by the U.S. intelligence community.

"The Ethics Committee, however, announced Thursday that it would close its investigation following consultation with experts in the classification process, a step that resulted in the conclusion that any information Nunes shared was not classified."

<http://politi.co/2k9350W>

THE RUSSIA REPORT -- "Previously undisclosed emails show follow-up after Trump Tower meeting," by CNN's Jim Sciutto, Manu Raju and Jeremy Herb: "The British publicist who arranged the June 2016 meeting with Russians and Donald Trump Jr. sent multiple emails to a Russian participant and a member of Donald Trump's inner circle later that summer, multiple sources told CNN, the first indication there was any follow-up after the meeting. The emails raise new questions for congressional investigators about what was discussed at Trump Tower. Trump Jr. has for months contended that after being promised he would get dirt on Hillary Clinton, the brief

meeting focused almost exclusively on the issue of Russian adoptions, saying there was no discussion with the participants after that session.

"The emails from the publicist, Rob Goldstone, were discovered by congressional investigators and raised at Wednesday's classified hearing with Trump Jr., who said he could not recall the interactions, several sources said. None of the newly disclosed emails were sent directly to Trump Jr. They are bound to be a subject during Goldstone's closed-door meetings with the House and Senate intelligence panels, which are expected to take place as early as next week." <http://cnn.it/2B3rVKd>

-- "Russian social media executive sought to help Trump campaign in 2016, emails show," by WaPo's Ros Helderman, Anton Troianovski and Tom Hamburger: "An executive at a leading Russian social media company made several overtures to Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016 - including days before the November election - urging the candidate to create a page on the website to appeal to Russian Americans and Russians. The executive at Vkontakte, or VK, Russia's equivalent to Facebook, emailed Donald Trump Jr. and social media director Dan Scavino in January and again in November of last year, offering to help promote Trump's campaign to its nearly 100 million users, according to people familiar with the messages." <http://wapo.st/2kFx0ln>

-- "Manafort attorney: Op-ed published to 'correct the public record' in Ukraine," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Paul Manafort's attorney swung back at special Russia prosecutor Robert Mueller Thursday over accusations the former Donald Trump campaign chairman violated a court gag order by ghost-writing an op-ed about his work in Ukraine. The article was not intended for a U.S. audience or to influence the pending U.S. criminal case against Manafort, who's pleaded not guilty to multiple charges including fraud and money laundering, argued lawyer Kevin Downing.

"All he has tried to do is to correct the public record in Ukraine concerning his consulting activities in Ukraine," Downing wrote in his six-page brief to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The nearly 800-word article was published online earlier Thursday by the Kyiv Post, an English-language newspaper based in Ukraine, under the byline of Oleg Voloshin, a former spokesman for Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs." <http://politi.co/2j5K03k>

LAST SHOT IN ALABAMA -- "How to beat Roy Moore, according to the guy who nearly did," by Daniel Strauss: "Democrats haven't won a statewide election in Alabama in almost a decade. But in 2012, one Democrat almost pulled it off: Bob Vance, a mild-mannered circuit court judge from Birmingham, who came within 4 points of beating none other than Roy Moore. Now Democrats are looking back at that state Supreme Court contest for clues on how their Senate nominee, former U.S. attorney Doug Jones, might improve slightly upon Vance's performance and stage a special election upset in a state long seen as out of reach to the party.

"In an interview with POLITICO, Vance described how he almost toppled Moore five

years ago: by combining strong turnout from African-Americans energized by President Barack Obama's reelection campaign with aggressive outreach to what he called 'reasonable conservatives' put off by Moore's hard-line politics - outreach that was unusually successful in Alabama's most-educated suburbs, according to a POLITICO analysis of the 2012 returns." <http://politi.co/2yOfpfv>

STICKING AROUND? -- "Hatch hosting re-election fundraiser in January," by CNN's Maeve Reston: "Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch is hosting a re-election fundraiser in early January, according to an invitation obtained by CNN, stoking further intrigue about a Senate seat that's being eyed by Mitt Romney. Hatch is inviting donors to his eighth annual ski retreat January 5-6 at the posh St. Regis Hotel in Park City, Utah. The suggested donation for the family pass for couples with children is \$5,000 to The Hatch Election Committee. A \$3,500 donation to the PAC is requested for two passes." <http://cnn.it/2yOwu92>

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- The president will have lunch with VP Mike Pence and later this afternoon meet with Defense Secretary James Mattis. He is flying to Pensacola, Florida to participate in a "Make America Great Again" rally. Afterward, he will head to West Palm Beach.

HOLIDAY-SEASON SNUB -- "Congressional Democrats Left Out of White House Hanukkah Party," by NYT's Julie Hirschfeld Davis: "Mr. Trump, who prizes loyalty and seldom forgets a slight, left Democratic members of Congress off his Hanukkah list this year, according to congressional aides tracking the invites. He also did not invite Reform Jewish leaders who have been critical of him or progressive Jewish activists who have differed with him publicly on policy issues. ...

"Representatives Lee Zeldin of New York and David Kustoff of Tennessee, the two Jewish Republicans in Congress, were attending the party, their offices said. But Jewish Democrats left off the invite list -- many of whom have been harsh critics of Mr. Trump -- were not in a festive mood. ...

"I am not aware of the political affiliation of any of the guests, but I do know that this year was meant to be more personal than political,' said Stephanie Grisham, a spokeswoman for Melania Trump, the first lady, whose office oversees White House party planning. She declined to elaborate." <http://nyti.ms/2iE2FPG>

-- HOW THE REST OF WASHINGTON ACTS. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) is hosting a Hanukkah party with Zeldin, a New York Republican, and has invited lawmakers and ... wait for it ... some reporters!

SPOTTED last night at the White House Hanukkah party (the lamb and latkes were a hit): Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Louise Linton, VA Secretary David Shulkin, Israeli Amb. Ron Dermer, Jason Greenblatt, Gary and Lisa Pevaroff-Cohn, Justice Stephen Breyer, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, Josh Raffel, Michael Cohen and his wife, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson, Elliott Broidy, former Sen.

Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), Jeremy Katz, Eli Miller, Avi Berkowitz, Julia Hahn, Cassidy Dumbauld, Joe Hagin, Boris Epshteyn, Matt Brooks and Josh Mandel.

SPOTTED: Michael Cohen on the Acela from NY to D.C. yesterday. He was heading to the WH Hanukkah party, where he took his wife, son and daughter.

SPOTTED at America First Action's Hanukkah party -- co-hosted by the RJC at the Trump Hotel: Reps. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), David Kustoff (R-Tenn.), Ed Royce (R-Calif.), Don Bacon (R-Neb.), Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.), Brian Mast (R-Fla.), Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), Scott Taylor (R-Va.), and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), Ohio State Treasurer Josh Mandel, Norm Coleman, Matt Brooks, Brian O. and Natasha Walsh, Corey Lewandowski, David Bossie, Sheriff David Clarke and Katrina Pierson.

QUOTE OF THE DAY -- @Olivianuzzi: "Melania Trump, who loves being the First Lady, said today she would like to spend the holidays 'on a deserted island,' per pool report".

ON DAVID BROOKS' MIND, NYT, "The G.O.P. Is Rotting": "The Republican Party is doing harm to every cause it purports to serve. If Republicans accept Roy Moore as a United States senator, they may, for a couple years, have one more vote for a justice or a tax cut, but they will have made their party loathsome for an entire generation. The pro-life cause will be forever associated with moral hypocrisy on an epic scale. The word 'evangelical' is already being discredited for an entire generation. Young people and people of color look at the Trump-Moore G.O.P. and they are repulsed, maybe forever." <http://nyti.ms/2AnTGh2>

--ROMNEY VS. BANNON -- George Romney, the brother of RNC chairman Ronna Romney McDaniel and grandson of the late Michigan Gov. George Romney, posts on Facebook: "I heard that Steve Bannon knocked my Uncle Mitt and my entire family including my grandfather, my father, my brothers, my cousins including all five of Mitt's sons, and me for serving religious missions instead of serving in the military. News flash Stevo, if you are saying that you are dishonorable for not serving in the military you are insulting most of the people you were speaking to at that rally. You were also insulting those who serve in the military that fight for our religious freedoms. Serving a religious mission is a much more honorable activity than molesting a 14 year old girl, or supporting someone who did. Supporting a conservative child molester is not conservative." **See a screenshot of the post** <http://bit.ly/2iD5znG>

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU -- Last night's debut of the Politico Playbook Live Audio Briefing was a huge success. We'll release the audio on our feeds (**Apple Podcasts** <http://apple.co/2uK0bDc> ... **Stitcher** <http://bit.ly/2BTyvQZ>) tomorrow! **Pic of Anna, Jake and NYT's Michael Barbaro** <http://bit.ly/2k8kAyk>

Playbook Reads

ERIK PRINCE UPDATE -- "Private War: Erik Prince Has His Eye On Afghanistan's Rare Metals," by BuzzFeed's Aram Roston: "BuzzFeed News is publishing the slide presentation by the founder of Blackwater to privatize the Afghan war and mine Afghanistan's valuable minerals. He pitched the proposal to the Trump administration. Prince told BuzzFeed News, 'You're a f***ing hack.'" <http://bzfd.it/2AmQxhk>

JOE HAGIN PROFILE - "This is the White House wise man Trump's detractors are counting on," by McClatchy's Katie Glueck: "Around 2 P.M. on the afternoon before Donald Trump's inauguration, Hillary Clinton's longtime aide and gatekeeper Philippe Reines was sitting on a couch in his Georgetown condo, still in pajamas, absorbing the new reality of the Trump presidency. Reines had stayed home from his consulting firm that day, still deeply shaken by Clinton's loss two months before. But as he watched televised scenes of the president-elect's team assembling in Washington, Reines glimpsed the one incoming Trump staffer who could offer a glimmer of relief. 'I recognized Joe Hagin, and immediately had a feeling of, well, at least that's one person to say thank God about,' Reines told McClatchy.

"In my mind, Joe Hagin is the first line of defense in avoiding nuclear Armageddon. I think if it ever got that far, Joe Hagin might save the world.' Hagin, deputy chief of staff for operations in the White House, is the rare, perhaps singular person in Trump's orbit who commands near-universal respect and even gratitude from across the ideological spectrum. He is widely seen as a steadying hand in an administration that has struggled with investigations, inexperience and infighting." <http://bit.ly/2BYGTic>

***** **A message from PhRMA:** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

THE BOOK DEAL -- "2 Times Reporters Will Write Book on Sexual Abuse Scandals," by NYT's Maggie Astor: "The New York Times reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey will publish a book about the sexual abuse and harassment scandals that have convulsed the nation over the past two months, Penguin Press confirmed on Thursday.

"In this moment of attack on their profession, Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey's investigative reporting on sexual harassment has proven that the discipline, craft and ethics of journalism can truly spark social change,' Ann Godoff, president and editor in chief of Penguin Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, said in a statement. 'Their book will contextualize and enlarge this important conversation.'" <http://nyti.ms/2nI1sMC>

MEDIAWATCH - PER MORNING MEDIA: "ASSOCIATED PRESS LEAVES

NATIONAL ELECTION POOL: The news agency confirmed to Morning Media that it has left the consortium of major networks that share expenses and the results of exit polls used on election night. ... The AP quietly left the consortium a few months ago, but its departure had not been previously reported. Fox left the network election group in April over frustrations with 2016 election night polls."

--**DATA DU JOUR** -- NYT's Ken Vogel: Brent "Bozell's Media Research Center ... has raised \$87 million over the last half dozen years." <http://nyti.ms/2AY74YB>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt taking his staff out to Le Diplomate last night

THE CAFE MILANO CROWD, last night -- Newt and Callista Gingrich ... Gary Cohn and Lisa Pevaroff-Cohn

SPOTTED at the Trump Hotel last night at a book party for Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie's book "Let Trump Be Trump: The Inside Story of His Rise to the Presidency" -- **\$16.20 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2B26EQY> : Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Louise Linton, Newt and Ambassador Callista Gingrich, Sheriff David Clarke, Kellyanne Conway, Heather Nauert, Reps. Steve King (R-Iowa), Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), Louie Gohmert (R-Texas), Roger Williams (R-Texas), Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.), and Billy Long (R-Mo.), Brian Darling, Peter Doocy, Jon Allen, Kevin Cirilli, Chris Ruddy, Alexandra Preate, Eli Miller, Amy Holmes, Toby Harnden, Amanda House, Charlie Spiering, John Coale, Katrina Pierson, Ed Henry, Sam Stein, Lachlan Markay, Andy Surabian, Ned Ryun, Rob Wasinger, Natalie Davis, Mike Rubino, James Reed, Ralph Reed, Jim Gilmore, Jon Karl, John Roberts, Eric Bolling, Kayleigh McEnany, Josh Dawsey, Jen Jacobs, Sergio Gor, Hadas Gold, Cherie Paquette, Robert Draper, Jackie Alemany, Kylie Atwood, Ali Dukakis, Major Garrett, Kathleen Parker, Bill Bennett.

SUNDAY SO FAR - CBS' "Face The Nation": Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine). Political panel: Molly Ball, Margaret Brennan, Lanhee Chen and Ed O'Keefe

--**"Fox News Sunday":** Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) ... Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) ... Panel: Newt Gingrich, Rachael Bade, Mike Needham, Charles Lane

--**NBC's "Meet the Press":** Panel: Cornell Belcher, David Brooks, Hallie Jackson, Peggy Noonan

--**CNN's "State of the Union":** Panel: Amanda Carpenter, Bakari Sellers, Nina Turner, Marc Lotter

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** (guest host: Nia-Malika Henderson): Eliana Johnson, Manu Raju, Sara Murray, Matt Viser

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: Judd Legum, editor-in-chief of ThinkProgress, celebrating with his "wife and my 5-year-old, Mo. We'll probably play some Monopoly Jr. or Legos." **How he thinks the Trump presidency is going:** "It's been going for 321 days. Every day is a long day." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2nHEvcs> ... WaPo publicist **Brooke Lorenz.** **A fun fact about Brooke:** "I'm conversational in American Sign Language. If 'Party In The USA' comes on, there's a strong possibility I'll break out a performance of the sign language version." **Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2BMzYaP>

BIRTHDAYS: Rachel Sklar ... Lizzie O'Leary, host of Marketplace Weekend (hat tips: Ben Chang) ... Marc Burstein, senior executive producer at ABC News ... Jordan Morrell ... World Bank President Jim Yong Kim is 58 ... Ann Coulter is 56 ... AP's Pablo Martinez Monsivais ... Honey Sharp (h/t son Daniel Lippman) ... ThinkProgress editor Judd Legum ... Politico's Danica Stanciu ... Ginny Badanes, strategic advisor for Campaign Tech Services at Microsoft ... Brie Sachse, head of Siemens USA's public affairs ... Cayman Clevenger ... The Guardian's Sabrina Siddiqui ... Stephen Spaulding, chief of strategy and external affairs at Common Cause ... Nick Colvin, general counsel and senior adviser to the Chicago City Treasurer ... Steve Bouchard (h/t Jon Haber) ... P. Lynn Scarlett ...

... **Rep. Raul Labrador** (R-Idaho) is 5-0 ... former Rep. Duke Cunningham (R-Calif.) is 76 ... NYCLU executive director Donna Lieberman ... Sylvester Okere ... Elyse Perlmutter-Gumbiner, NBC News' new White House producer (h/t Olivia Petersen) ... Al Williams is 68 ... Mark Zavatsky is 53 ... Michael Shapiro ... M. Dolon Hickmon ... Courtney Johnson ... Luis Rosero, an Obama HHS alum ... Karen Keller, director of special events and protocol at the Smithsonian ... B.R. McConnon of DDC ... Emily Leaman ... Solange Uwimana ... Alison Matarazzo Edwards ... Jen Minton ... Anna Waterfield ... Tom Bush ... FTI Consulting's Sarah Mann ... Courtney O'Neal ... Austin James ... Jeff Neubauer, proud father of Greta Neubauer running for the open assembly seat in Racine, Wis. ... Steve Day ... Jackie Gran ... Milwaukee mayor Tom Barrett ... Nancy Balz (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kqd6Nu> *****

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To: Milbourn, Cathy[Milbourn.Cathy@epa.gov]
Cc: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 1:16:27 PM
Subject: Weekly Round-Up Release

Cathy, can we get this into a release and sent to John, Liz and I please? Thank you!

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund site, it was a successful week at the EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009."

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no 'environmental savior,' and his administration accomplished nothing. *"Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration's attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama's tenure."*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *"Pruitt was*

also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. 'What's so great about that record,' he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. 'I don't quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.'"

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because 'they exceeded their statutory authority.' 'They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.'"*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *"Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA's failure to fix Flint's water system."*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors. *"The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I'm sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it's the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board."*

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. *"Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on "cooperative federalism" and working with the states."*

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. *"[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues."*

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. *"Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota's ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery."*

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. *"If you go back to the inception of the agency... Congress has been very insistent in*

saying the states have a role,' EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. 'The past administration simply disregarded that,' he continued."

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. "Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state's relationship with that federal agency. 'The days of coercive federalism are over,' new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum."

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. "Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president's new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota."

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule."

Oklahoma City's KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. "The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... 'Improving the Nation's water is one of EPA's highest priorities under the Trump administration,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma's attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump's administration."

To: Timothy Cama[tcama@thehill.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:44:24 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Timothy Cama <tcama@thehill.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Timothy Cama [<mailto:tcama@thehill.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Hi-

Could you confirm the Washington Post report that EPA is ending the Definers contract?

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer

The Hill

(202) 695-6245

Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Sat 12/9/2017 3:33:20 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by PhRMA: VIOLENCE in Gaza -- TRUMP takes to Pensacola to boost Roy Moore -- AP: FRANKS offers 5 million to woman to carry child -- OBAMA's Nazi Germany warning -- SUNDAY SHOWS and WEEKEND READS -- B'DAY: Kirsten Gillibrand

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by PhRMA

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

REUTERS/GAZA: "Israeli strikes kill two Gaza gunmen, but anti-Trump protests subside": "Israeli air strikes in Gaza killed two Palestinian gunmen on Saturday after rockets were fired from the enclave, in violence that erupted over President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital." <http://reut.rs/2kLGIYF>

-- **EGYPT'S** Coptic pope and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas say they will not meet with Vice President Mike Pence on his upcoming trip to the region. **AFP story from this morning** <http://bit.ly/2B2eBW9>

Good Saturday morning. The winter's first snow is beginning to fall in northwest Washington.

BANNER HEADLINE -- PENSACOLA NEWS JOURNAL:"YOU WILL NEVER BE IGNORED AGAIN ... Trump: Vote for Roy Moore in Alabama special election" <http://bit.ly/2y9Zqol>

OBAMA SPEAKS!, via CNN's Miranda Green: "'You have to tend to this garden of democracy, otherwise things can fall apart fairly quickly. And we've seen societies where that happens,' Obama said at the Economic Club of Chicago on Tuesday, according to video of the event. 'Now, presume there was a ballroom here in Vienna in the late 1920s or '30s that looked and seemed as if it, filled with the music and art and literature that was emerging, would continue into perpetuity. And then 60 million people died. An entire world was plunged into chaos,' Obama said. 'So you got to pay attention -- and vote.'" <http://cnn.it/2iKEMWS> ... **Video** <http://bit.ly/2AHdYyV>

BUZZFEED'S JOHN HUDSON: "How Secret Talks With Russia to Prevent Election

Meddling Collapsed": "The Trump administration has rejected a sweeping Russian proposal seeking a mutual ban on foreign political interference, three senior U.S. administration officials tell BuzzFeed News. ... Putin dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov to Washington for a July 17 meeting with Under Secretary Tom Shannon, the No. 3 official at the State Department. ... [T]hree U.S. administration officials, including one inside the meeting, said Ryabkov handed over a document containing a bold proposal: A sweeping noninterference agreement between Moscow and Washington that would prohibit both governments from meddling in the other's domestic politics.

"After examining the proposal, which has not previously been reported, U.S. officials told Moscow there would be no deal. 'We said "thank you very much but now is not the time for this,"' said a senior State Department official. ... The decision to walk away from the offer could prove fateful. Signs of Russian meddling in foreign elections continue to flourish ... The US official described the Russian proposal in historic terms, likening it to the 1933 accord between President Franklin Roosevelt and Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov that ended 16 years of American nonrecognition of the Soviet Union in exchange for a pledge not to interfere in US politics."

<http://bzfd.it/2B13LzX>

BOMBSHELLS -- AP's JULIET LINDERMAN: "Ex-aide: Rep. Franks offered \$5 million to carry his child": "The former staffer said the Arizona congressman asked at least four times if she'd be willing to act as a surrogate in exchange for money. Franks, in his statement announcing his resignation, said he and his wife, who have struggled with infertility, have twins who were carried through surrogacy.

"The former aide said the conversations took place in private, sometimes in the congressman's car, and that she repeatedly told him she wasn't interested. She said she never filed a formal complaint because until recently she didn't know where to go, but that his behavior had made her feel uncomfortable.

"The Associated Press verified the identity of the staffer and confirmed that she worked in Franks' office. She asked that her name be withheld out of concern for her privacy. 'During my time there, I was asked a few times to look over a 'contract' to carry his child, and if I would conceive his child, I would be given \$5 million,' she said, adding that she refused to look over the contract and has never seen a copy."

<http://bit.ly/2BPnLIB>

-- FRANKS IS WORTH between \$11.1 million and \$55.25 million with most of his money in Trinity Petroleum stock, according to his most recent financial disclosure.

-- RACHAEL BADE and JAKE SHERMAN: "Female aides fretted Franks wanted to have sex to impregnate them": "Arizona Rep. Trent Franks allegedly made unwanted advances toward female staffers in his office and retaliated against one who rebuffed him, according to House GOP sources with knowledge of a complaint against him. ...

"A former staffer also alleged that Franks tried to persuade a female aide that they were in love by having her read an article that described how a person knows they're in love with someone, the sources said. One woman believed she was the subject of retribution after rebuffing Franks. While she enjoyed access to the congressman before the incident, that access was revoked afterward, she told Republican leaders."

<http://politi.co/2khknZU>

MORE FRANKS INTRIGUE -- SETTING UP A SUPER PAC? -- "Fox 9 confronts Rep. Franks before his immediate resignation," by Tom Lyden of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Fox affiliate: "While in Washington D.C. covering the resignation of Senator Al Franken, our Fox 9 crew encountered a different lawmaker facing a controversy of his own. Outside their hotel room [at the Hotel Palomar], Fox 9 reporter Tom Lyden noticed Republican Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona speaking on his cell phone. ... But listening in on his call, Fox 9 heard him talking to someone about getting \$2 million to start a political action committee on the filibuster issue. Fox 9 then asked Franks about the exchange on camera.

"Tom Lyden: 'You are still in office and I heard you on the phone talking about setting up a \$2 million PAC to go after the issue of the filibuster, is that proper for you to be doing while your still in office?' Congressman Franks: 'Well, that's something I'm not going to discuss.' Lyden: 'But I heard you on the phone talking about soliciting \$2 million for a PAC while you're still in office, that seems to be an ethics violation?' Franks: 'No, I don't think so.'" [4-min. video](http://bit.ly/2B2SO0v) <http://bit.ly/2B2SO0v>

-- ACTUALLY, yes, it wouldn't only be an ethics violation, it would be illegal if he explicitly asked someone for \$2 million while still serving in office. Sitting lawmakers can only solicit up to \$5,000 for super PACs.

WHAT'S ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S MIND -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:21 a.m.: "CNN'S slogan is CNN, THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS. Everyone knows this is not true, that this could, in fact, be a fraud on the American Public. There are many outlets that are far more trusted than Fake News CNN. Their slogan should be CNN, THE LEAST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS!" ... **at 8:02 a.m.:** "Fake News CNN made a vicious and purposeful mistake yesterday. They were caught red handed, just like lonely Brian Ross at ABC News (who should be immediately fired for his 'mistake'). Watch to see if @CNN fires those responsible, or was it just gross incompetence?"

... at 7:52 a.m.: "A big contingent of very enthusiastic Roy Moore fans at the rally last night. We can't have a Pelosi/Schumer Liberal Democrat, Jones, in that important Alabama Senate seat. Need your vote to Make America Great Again! Jones will always vote against what we must do for our Country."

******* A message from PhRMA :** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what

patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

SCARBOROUGH COUNTRY -- TRUMP GOES TO PENSACOLA AND GOES ALL IN FOR MOORE -- "Trump says country 'can't afford' to let Roy Moore lose," by Alex Isenstadt in Pensacola, Florida and Henry C. Jackson: "It took him a while, but President Donald Trump eventually used a Friday-night rally to forcefully endorse Roy Moore, the embattled Alabama Republican running for the Senate. Trump framed the election of Moore - who has been accused of numerous episodes of inappropriate sexual behavior, including child molestation - as vital to the country's interest, imploring Alabamians to 'get out and vote for Roy Moore.' 'Do it,' he added. 'Do it.' ...

"As the race draws to a close, the White House is considering taking other steps to boost Moore, including flooding the state with robocalls, text messages and emails. While the president's popularity has ebbed elsewhere, he remains overwhelmingly popular in conservative Alabama. The administration has reviewed polling that shows Moore with a narrow but steady lead - and is confident that he will win."

<http://politi.co/2kO21DK>

THE HOUSE GUYS who traveled with Trump: **Rep. Matt Gaetz** (R-Fla.): "We've got an economy that's growing and illegal immigration that's slowing ... We are draining the swamp and rebuilding our military." ... **Rep. Ron DeSantis** (R-Fla.): "This is a president that is facing unprecedented opposition from the Democrats, from the media, but I repeat myself... from the other swamp dwellers. ... We need to enact term limits for members of Congress."

-- FOR THE RECORD: Gaetz's father is Don Gaetz, the former president of the Florida Senate. DeSantis -- a Yale grad who picked up a law degree from Harvard -- is eyeing a race for governor after three terms in D.C.

TRUMP'S SATURDAY -- Trump is headed to Jackson, Mississippi, to visit the Civil Rights Museum which he will get a tour of and also give remarks. He will then fly to West Palm Beach, Florida.

-- FROM POOLER TODD GILLMAN: "The president's motorcade pulled out of Mar-a-Lago at 8:57 a.m. in a light rain. It arrived at Air Force One at 9:09 in a Florida deluge whipped by wind. The tarmac covered in water. Pool is soaked. ... The president is scheduled to be wheels up at 11:55, while the outdoor phase of the ceremony [at the Civil Rights Museum] is underway."

IN CALIFORNIA -- "Firefighters had to step aside as winds powered infernos," by AP's Julie Watson and Krysta Fauria in Fallbrook, California: "Firefighters in Southern California were on high alert for dangerous fire potential even before the first blazes broke out. But once flames met ferocious winds, fire crews were mostly powerless to stop infernos that destroyed more than 500 buildings, killed dozens of horses and forced hundreds of thousands of people to run from six out-of-control fires that have burned over 260 square miles since Monday. ...

"Firefighters gained ground Friday, and some of the earliest evacuees who fled from flames Monday were being allowed to return home. Yet new fires were popping up, and danger persisted. Vegetation is bone dry, there's been hardly any rainfall and winds were expected to gusts up to 40 mph Saturday and up to 50 mph Sunday in the Los Angeles and Ventura areas, the National Weather Service said." <http://bit.ly/2iJK2df>

GREAT LEDE -- "Trump calls Romney 'a great man,' but works to undermine him and block Senate run," by WaPo's Michael Scherer and Josh Dawsey: "Before Ronna Romney McDaniel took over as Republican National Committee chairwoman earlier this year, President Trump had a request: Would she be willing to stop using her middle name publicly? Trump followed up by saying in a lighthearted way that McDaniel, the niece of former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, could do what she wanted, according to two people familiar with the comments. But the change was soon plain for all to see. Though she had used her maiden name for years in Michigan, where her grandfather George W. Romney had been governor, McDaniel dropped 'Romney' from most official party communications and has rarely used it since." <http://wapo.st/2kGzU9d>

NYT SCOOP -- "F.B.I. Warned Hope Hicks About Emails From Russian Operatives," by Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo: "F.B.I. officials warned one of President Trump's top advisers, Hope Hicks, earlier this year about repeated attempts by Russian operatives to make contact with her during the presidential transition, according to people familiar with the events. The Russian outreach efforts show that, even after American intelligence agencies publicly accused Moscow of trying to influence the outcome of last year's presidential election, Russian operatives were undaunted in their efforts to establish contacts with Mr. Trump's advisers. There is no evidence that Ms. Hicks did anything improper. According to former officials, American intelligence and law enforcement agencies became alarmed by introductory emails that Ms. Hicks received from Russian government addresses in the weeks after Mr. Trump's election.

"After he took office, senior F.B.I. counterintelligence agents met with Ms. Hicks in the White House Situation Room at least twice, gave her the names of the Russians who had contacted her, and said that they were not who they claimed to be. The F.B.I. was concerned that the emails to Ms. Hicks may have been part of a Russian intelligence operation, and they urged Ms. Hicks to be cautious." <http://nyti.ms/2Aolf8G>

-- "Trump's Allies Urge Harder Line as Mueller Probe Heats Up," by WSJ's Peter Nicholas, Aruna Viswanatha and Erica Orden: "Republicans ... point to Andrew Weissmann - a Mueller deputy who had applauded the Justice Department's decision not to defend the initial White House travel ban on people from majority Muslim nations- as evidence of bias on the special counsel team. 'I am so proud,' Mr. Weissmann wrote in the subject line of an email, which was released by the conservative group Judicial Watch. Mr. Weissmann also attended Hillary Clinton's election-night party at the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York, according to people familiar with his attendance. At the time, Mr. Weissmann was running the Justice Department's fraud section, which is a

senior career post within the agency." <http://on.wsj.com/2keZQoJ>

ABOUT THOSE RUSSIA TIES -- "Democratic senators delay K.T. McFarland ambassador nomination," by Cristiano Lima: "Sens. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) on Friday placed a hold on K.T. McFarland's nomination to become U.S. ambassador to Singapore, urging congressional leaders to re-examine her 'knowledge and involvement' in contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian officials.

"In a letter addressed to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), the two members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee announced their intent to delay the nomination process until McFarland 'publicly clarifies' potential discrepancies in her statements regarding communications between Michael Flynn, her former superior at the National Security Council, and a Russian diplomat." <http://politi.co/2A8syyf>

THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT FILES -- "Taxpayers Paid \$220K to Settle Case Involving Rep. Alcee Hastings," by Roll Call's Stephanie Akin: "The Treasury Department paid \$220,000 in a previously undisclosed agreement to settle a lawsuit alleging sexual harassment that involved Florida Democrat Alcee L. Hastings, according to documents obtained by Roll Call. Winsome Packer, a former staff member of a congressional commission that promotes international human rights, said in documents that the congressman touched her, made unwanted sexual advances, and threatened her job. At the time, Hastings was the chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, where Packer worked. Hastings has called Packer's charges 'ludicrous' and in documents said he never sexually harassed her." <http://bit.ly/2BPd1nh>

FLASHBACK -- "House ethics panel scolds several lawmakers," by Anna Palmer and John Bresnahan on Dec. 11, 2014: "Both the Ethics Committee and OCE looked into Packer's allegations. OCE recommended a full-scale investigation by Ethics even though it was not able to determine if there was 'substantial reason to believe' Packer's claim, but Ethics decided not to take that step. In its report on the Hastings' matter, Ethics said that 'while the most serious allegations were not supported by the evidence, Representative Hastings has admitted to certain conduct that is less than professional.'

...

"The Ethics Committee stated: 'Despite the fact that the conduct in this case does not rise to the level of actionable violations of the rules, the Committee does not want to leave the impression that Representative Hastings' behavior was at all times appropriate. He admitted to some conduct that, while not wrongful per se, certainly could be misunderstood... Nevertheless, hugging is not the most professional way to greet coworkers, and different individuals have different comfort levels for touching others.'" <http://politi.co/2A5J8yB>

BEYOND CONGRESS -- "For Female Lobbyists, Harassment Often Accompanies Access," by NYT's Trip Gabriel and Julie Bosman: "Vanessa Alarid was a lobbyist in

New Mexico when she asked a lawmaker over drinks one night if she could count on his support for a bill that appeared to be coming down to a single vote. 'You can have my vote if you have sex with me,' Ms. Alarid recalled the lawmaker saying, although he used cruder language for sexual intercourse. He told Ms. Alarid she had the same first name as his wife, so he would not get confused if he called out in bed.

"Then he kissed Ms. Alarid on the lips, she said. Shocked, Ms. Alarid, who was 32 at the time, pushed him away. Only after he was gone did she let the tears flow. When her bill came up on the floor of the New Mexico House of Representatives the next day, March 20, 2009, it failed by a single vote, including a 'No' by the lawmaker, Representative Thomas A. Garcia. As Ms. Alarid watched from the House gallery, she said, Mr. Garcia blew her a kiss and shrugged his shoulders with arms spread."

<http://nyti.ms/2iGY8fc>

-- "Prominent appeals court Judge Alex Kozinski accused of sexual misconduct," by WaPo's Matt Zapotosky: "A former clerk for Judge Alex Kozinski said the powerful and well-known jurist, who for many years served as chief judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, called her into his office several times and pulled up pornography on his computer, asking if she thought it was photoshopped or if it aroused her sexually. Heidi Bond, who clerked for Kozinski from 2006 to 2007, said the porn was not related to any case.

"One set of images she remembered was of college-age students at a party where 'some people were inexplicably naked while everyone else was clothed.' Another was a sort of digital flip book that allowed users to mix and match heads, torsos and legs to create an image of a naked woman. Bond is one of six women - all former clerks or more junior staffers known as externs in the 9th Circuit - who alleged to The Washington Post in recent weeks that Kozinski, now 67 and still serving as a judge on the court, subjected them to a range of inappropriate sexual conduct or comments. She is one of two former clerks who said Kozinski asked them to view porn in his chambers."

<http://wapo.st/2jBfvPv>

-- "Ex-Fox News anchor claims Trump tried to kiss her," by Page Six's Emily Smith: "Former Fox News anchor Juliet Huddy said President Donald Trump tried to kiss her in an elevator around the time he married First Lady Melania. Huddy, who allegedly received a settlement after she made a complaint against disgraced anchor Bill O'Reilly, described how the mogul leaned in to kiss her after he took her to lunch at Trump Tower in 2005. The TV newswoman, who now hosts a radio show on WABC Radio, revealed on 'Mornin!!! with Bill Schulz' on compoundmedia.com, that she had rebuffed the now-president in the Trump Tower elevator. And Trump later appeared on her Fox News chat show, and joked to the audience, 'I hit on her but she blew me off.'"

<http://pge.sx/2kesOVw>

AROUND THE TAX HORN -- "Trump's casual tax comments scald his Hill allies, again," by Nancy Cook: "Oops, President Donald Trump did it again. His casual mention of a 22 percent corporate rate on his way to New York last Saturday kicked off

a week of unexpected haggling on a topline tax issue many considered already settled, just as congressional negotiators are rushing to get a final bill to the president in time for Christmas -- a date he himself has insisted on.

"It's the latest example of the president getting in the way of his party's major legislative goal, even if unintentionally, and once again shows the perils for policymakers and legislators in the Trump era, when an unexpected, off-the-cuff comment or tweet can undo weeks of work. On Friday, more than 20 conservative groups - including Americans for Tax Reform, Club for Growth, FreedomWorks and the National Taxpayers Union - sent a letter to congressional conferees reminding them that the groups' original support for any tax overhaul was tied to that magic 20 percent figure." <http://politi.co/2iG1nUq>

HEY, KEVIN MCCARTHY! -- WSJ'S NOUR MALAS and KRISTINA PETERSON, with an Irvine, California, dateline: **"California House Republican Hears It at Home Over Tax Bill:** Rep. Mimi Walters's constituents worry about mortgage-interest cap, end to local deductions": "In her district's biggest city and across its conservative bastions, Republican U.S. Rep. Mimi Walters is facing criticism over the GOP tax overhaul bill that she voted for last month. The bill might increase taxes for many of her constituents, rather than lower them.

"Under pressure from frustrated supporters, she is now working to modify the bill to ease the blow as lawmakers try to hash out a compromise with a measure passed by the Senate. Three of California's 14 House Republicans voted against the bill last month, citing measures that would curb or even eliminate some key deductions used widely by Californians. Mrs. Walters's support for the bill, by contrast, has drawn scrutiny from some at a tense moment for the state's Republicans, ahead of competitive midterm elections next year.

"I'm not going to vote for a Democrat, but am I going to vote for a Republican that is going to raise my taxes? That is the question," said Jeffrey Lalloway, a divorce lawyer and Republican member of Irvine's City Council." <http://on.wsj.com/2kLsgui>

LISTEN IN to the latest bonus Playbook Audio Briefing episode from our live recording Thursday night at Sixth and I Synagogue. Today we're posting Jake and Anna's discussion with **NYT's MICHAEL BARBARO** <http://bit.ly/2AGWD96> Make sure you subscribe on your favorite podcasting app (**Apple Podcasts** <http://apple.co/2uK0bDc> ... **Stitcher** <http://bit.ly/2BTyvQZ>) so you don't miss our conversation tomorrow with DCCC's Dan Sena and NRCC's John Rogers. **ICYMI** here's a link to our talk with POLITICO all-star panel of Seung Min Kim, Rachael Bade and Annie Karni <http://bit.ly/2iGgf4X>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump waves to supporters during a rally in Pensacola, Fla. on Dec. 8. | Jonathan Bachman/AP Photo

FUN STORY -- NYT'S SCOTT CACCIOLA: "Golden State Warriors' Go-to Guy Doesn't Play a Minute" <http://nyti.ms/2kKaelM>

WEST WING DEPARTURE LOUNGE - "Powell to leave White House in early 2018," by Annie Karni with Daniel Lippman: "Former Goldman Sachs partner Dina Powell, who joined Donald Trump's administration last January as an adviser on women's issues to Ivanka Trump and rose quickly to become deputy national security adviser with a heavy hand in Middle East issues, will be departing the administration early next year. ... A firm end date has not been decided on, a White House official said, but Powell is likely to leave in January or early February. Dr. Nadia Schadlow, a deputy assistant to the president who works on the National Security Council, is seen as Powell's likely successor ... Schadlow has been deeply involved with Trump's forthcoming national security strategy plan. ...

"Trump ... did not want Powell to leave and asked her to stay on the team. It is not clear what role she will continue to play from the outside. 'Dina has been an invaluable member of President Trump's team,' McMaster said in a statement. 'Her sage advice helped provide options to the president and her strong relationships across the U.S. government and internationally helped drive execution of the president's decisions. She is one of the most talented and effective leaders with whom I have ever served.'" <http://politi.co/2kL69Eb>

-- **JIM MATTIS** statement: "With the pending departure of Dina Powell, we are losing an invaluable member of the President's national security team. I personally appreciate Dina's partnership and contributions to the mission of the Department of Defense."

-- **@Martin_Indyk**: "Very sorry to hear that Dina Powell is leaving the NSC. She was a sane and sensible voice in a crazy environment. She deserves deep appreciation for her service."

WASHINGTON POST'S ROXANNE ROBERTS: "After months of rumors, the marriage of billionaire philanthropists David Rubenstein and Alice Rogoff has officially ended. The couple, who married in 1983, was granted a divorce in Montgomery County on Friday morning. All financial and other terms were settled privately and will remain confidential, according to Rubenstein's lawyer, Sandy Ain, and Rogoff's lawyer, Linda Ravdin." <http://wapo.st/2AFJm0H>

UPDATE -- "Official Toll in Puerto Rico: 62. Actual Deaths May Be 1,052," by Frances Robles, Kenan Davis, Sheri Fink and Sarah Almukhtar in the NYT: "A review by The New York Times of daily mortality data from Puerto Rico's vital statistics bureau indicates a significantly higher death toll after the hurricane than the government there has acknowledged. The Times's analysis found that in the 42 days after Hurricane Maria

made landfall on Sept. 20 as a Category 4 storm, 1,052 more people than usual died across the island. The analysis compared the number of deaths for each day in 2017 with the average of the number of deaths for the same days in 2015 and 2016. Officially, just 62 people died as a result of the storm that ravaged the island with nearly 150-mile-an-hour winds, cutting off power to 3.4 million Puerto Ricans. The last four fatalities were added to the death toll on Dec. 2." <http://nyti.ms/2kGBOGT>

JOSH GERSTEIN: "Supreme Court lifts orders to disclose DACA cancellation records": "A sharply divided Supreme Court on Friday lifted orders the Trump administration was facing to turn over more records detailing the decision to terminate the Obama-era program that offers quasi-legal status and work permits to so-called Dreamers. The justices voted, 5-4, to grant a temporary stay of orders that a San Francisco federal judge issued requiring federal officials to provide internal legal analyses, studies and other materials the administration gathered in advance of the decision announced in September to wind down the program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA." <http://politi.co/2BqtC4E>

***** **A message from PhRMA:** A medicine's path from the biopharmaceutical company to the patient involves many entities across the supply chain. A new report examines how money flows through this system - which includes wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and insurers - and how that impacts what patients pay at the pharmacy. Read more. <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker - **16 keepers** <http://politi.co/2BiWegm>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

-- **"What Happens When the Government Uses Facebook as a Weapon?"** by Lauren Etter on the cover of Bloomberg Businessweek: "It's social media in the age of 'patriotic trolling' in the Philippines, where the government is waging a campaign to destroy a critic-with a little help from Facebook itself." <https://bloom.bg/2iEzIZn> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2AlhyZt>

-- **"In Chatlogs, Celebrated Hacker and Activist Confesses Countless Sexual Assaults,"** by Sarah Jeong in the Verge: "I have drunkenly sexually assaulted or raped women - the exact number of which I am currently determining." <http://bit.ly/2y8eYsW>

-- **"The Upside of Office Flirtation? I'm living it,"** by Allison Benedikt in Slate: "When I was 23 years old, my boss would look down the gap at the waistband of my jeans when he walked past my desk. ... [H]e kissed me on the steps of the West 4th subway station without first getting my consent. We've now been happily married for 14 years and have three children." <http://slate.me/2BhRkjN>

-- **"Women Journalists Share Their Stories of Sexual Harassment,"** by Lucy Westcott in Newsweek in Aug. 2016: "The majority of women who spoke with

Newsweek said their sexual harassment happened early on in their journalism careers, when journalists are hungry for their first job and less likely to report an incident for fear of what might happen. Janille Miller, 39, was in her mid-20s when she interviewed for a broadcast journalism job. After an interview with the news director, Miller went with him to meet the head of news. She says she was asked to stand up and turn around."

<http://bit.ly/2BhIPGk>

-- **"Nicolás Maduro's Accelerating Revolution,"** by the New Yorker's Jon Lee Anderson: "Venezuela's President has outmaneuvered his opponents. Can he survive an economy in free fall?" <http://bit.ly/2Bkm2sr>

-- **"Is There a Limit to Scientific Understanding?"** by Martin Rees in The Atlantic: "Science will hit the buffers at some point. There are two reasons why this might happen. The optimistic one is that we clean up and codify certain areas to the point that there's no more to say. A second possibility is that we'll reach the limits of what our brains can grasp. There might be concepts, crucial to a full understanding of physical reality, that we aren't aware of, any more than a monkey comprehends Darwinism or meteorology. Some insights might have to await a post-human intelligence." <http://theatlantic.com/2jasmek> (h/t ALDaily.com)

-- **"Behind the Scenes With the World's Top Feather Detective,"** by Chris Sweeney in Audubon Magazine - per Longreads.com's description: "How do you tell the difference between a poached *Lampornis clemenciae* hummingbird and a *Amazilia violiceps*? Ask the feather detective, Pepper Trail. He works at the world's only wildlife forensics lab. Colleagues fear what will happen when he retires." <http://bit.ly/2hTjEew>

-- **"Millions Are Hounded for Debt They Don't Owe. One Victim Fought Back, With a Vengeance,"** by Zeke Faux in Bloomberg Businessweek: "Andrew Therrien wanted payback. He got it-and uncovered a conspiracy." <https://bloom.bg/2jchmNW>

-- **"Border Wars,"** by Zandria F. Robinson in Oxford American: "People from places like Texas and Florida and Delaware and especially Washington, D.C., like to act like they aren't in or from the South." <http://bit.ly/2k9obMA>

-- **"Deep Throat: An Institutional Analysis,"** by James Mann in the May 1992 issue of the Atlantic: <http://theatlantic.com/2AoztYs>

-- **"Compromise,"** by Ted Genoways in TNR: "A group of small-town environmentalist wanted to stop a potentially toxic Costco chicken plant. How did they end up fighting alongside anti-Muslim xenophobes." <http://bit.ly/2juJpVN>

-- **"On Self-Respect: Joan Didion's 1961 Essay from the Pages of Vogue"** - per Longform.org's description: "An essay on understanding our character, worth, and limits." <http://bit.ly/2AnrcUu>

-- **"I Made My Shed the Top Rated Restaurant On TripAdvisor,"** by Oobah Butler in

Vice: "And then served customers Iceland ready meals on its opening night."

<http://bit.ly/2iFw2Bd>

Playbookers

HOLIDAY PARTY CIRCUIT -- SPOTTED at the Polish Embassy holiday party last night, in which the band Suspicious Package (Tom Toles, Tim Burger, Josh Meyer, Bryan Greene and Christina Sevilla), performed at the Ambassador's residence: Ambassador Piotr Wilczek, Artur Orkisz, John McCarthy, Michael Crowley, Ryan Williams, Breanne Deppisch, Lily Mihalik, Sarah Gilmore, Meridith McGraw, Michael Falcone, Jamie Weinstein and Michelle Fields, Ali Dukakis, Hadas Gold, Josh and Ali Rogin, Kate Hanson, Arlette Saenz, Alice Lloyd, Emma Kenyon. **Pics by Ben Chang**
<http://bit.ly/2ySXS5H> ... <http://bit.ly/2kg0XEB> ... <http://bit.ly/2B29uFr>

SPOTTED at a White House Christmas open house yesterday: Ralph Reed, Peggy Nance, Matt Schlapp, Ginni Thomas, Connie Hair, Greg Mueller, Ken Blackwell, Marjorie Dannenfelser, former Rep. Jack Kingston.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Erin Miller Weibel, who works in communications at Facebook for their News Partnerships team and is an NBC News alum, and **Chris Weibel**, who works in equity trading at Wells Fargo Securities, on Friday welcomed Wade Harvey Weibel, who was born at 7:42 a.m. at 7lbs 15oz and 20.5 inches long. **Pic**
<http://bit.ly/2iJeynn>

-- **Laena Fallon**, senior adviser at the American Bankers Association and alum of the Financial Services Forum, and **Brendon Pomeroy**, a yacht captain, recently welcomed Teagan Mary Pomeroy. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2jBFey9>

BIRTHDAYS: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) is 51 - **read her Politico Magazine profile:** <http://politi.co/2Ao1Tle> ... Okla. Gov. Mary Fallin is 63 ... Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant is 63 ... Samantha Tubman, manager of special projects at the Obama Foundation (hat tip: Meredith Carden) ... Neal Wolin, a senior counselor for Brunswick Group and Obama Treasury alum, is 56 ... former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) is 7-0 ... Nathan Daschle, president and COO of the Daschle Group ... Terry Moran, chief foreign correspondent for ABC News ... Jonathan Wald, SVP at MSNBC (h/t Kurt Bardella) ... James Pindell, Boston Globe political reporter whose location on his Twitter is "Electoral College, USA" ... Jeff Smith is 44 ... Cris Turner, head of gov't affairs for the Americas at Dell ... Treasury's John E. Smith (h/t Peter Baker) ... Scott Schloegel, the acting first VP and vice chairman of the Export-Import Bank ... Politico alum Emily Kopp ... Rep. Pete Olson (R-Tex.) is 55 ... former Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-Tex.) is 71 ... Levick VP Andrew Ricci ... Laena Fallon, senior adviser at the American Bankers Association ... Kathryn Cameron Porter ...

... **Kyle Roberts**, president of Smart Media Group ... Fernando Lujan ... Ryan King,

deputy communications director for Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) (h/t Mitchell Rivard) ... Richard Allen Smith ... Graham Wilson ... Veronique Rodman ... Josh Katcher ... Hammad Ul Hassan ... Ryan Whalen of the Rockefeller Foundation ... Alli Blakely Sydnor (h/t Ed Cash) ... Karen Harbert, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy (h/t Blair Latoff Holmes) ... Megan Devlin, who oversees Meridian International Center's Global Forums, former editorial assistant to Steve Clemons at the Atlantic, and a craft beer "aficionado" (h/t Ben Chang) ... Shoshana Weissmann of R Street Institute ... Roll Call's Eric Garcia, "celebrating with milk steak and rum ham" (h/t Tara Jeffries) ... Dottie Suggs ... Tricia Enright, comms director for Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Derrick Johnson ... Anne Dudro ... Richard Wachtel is 35 ... Rhett Dawson ... Rick Horten is 49 ... Dawn Wilson ... Diane Kopp ... Robert Kraig (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

THE SHOWS by @MattMackowiak, filing from Austin:

--**NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) ... Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) ... Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.). Panel: Cornell Belcher, David Brooks, Hallie Jackson and Peggy Noonan

--**CNN's "State of the Union"**: U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley ... Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). Panel: Amanda Carpenter, Bakari Sellers and Nina Turner and Marc Lotter

--**"Fox News Sunday"**: U.S. Amb. to the U.N. Nikki Haley ... Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) and Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.). Panel: Newt Gingrich, Rachael Bade, Michael Needham and Charles Lane ... "Power Player of the Week" with Ben Shapiro

--**CBS's "Face the Nation"**: U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley ... Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) ... Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) ... Michael O'Hanlon and Kori Schake. Panel: Molly Ball, Margaret Brennan, Lanhee Chen and Ed O'Keefe

--**ABC's "This Week"**: Guests to be announced. Panel: Dan Balz, Jennifer Jacobs, Joshua Johnson and Susan Glasser

--**Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) ... Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) ... Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) ... Michael Mukasey. Panel: Ed Rollins and Mary Kissel

--**Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: David Bossie and Corey Lewandowski ... Mollie Hemingway ... Jessica Tarlov ... Mara Liasson ... Brent Lang

--**CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Eliana Johnson, Manu Raju, Sara Murray and Matt Viser (substitute anchor: CNN's Nia-Malika Henderson)

--**CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Foreign policy panel: Palestinian National Council member Hanan Ashrawi, former Israeli Foreign Minister and Jerusalem Center for

Public Affairs president Dore Gold and author and Council on Foreign Relations president Richard Haass ... United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

--**CNN's "Reliable Sources"**: Panel: Carl Bernstein, Elaina Plott and David Frum ... WVNN (Huntsville, Ala.) radio host Dale Jackson and Alabama Media Group columnist Kyle Whitmire ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) ... David Axelrod

--**Univision's "Al Punto"**: Panel: Former U.S. Treasurer Rosario Marin and political analysts Fabian Nuñez and Adolfo Franco ... Human Rights Watch's José Miguel Vivanco ... parents of mass shooting victims Fred and Maria Wright ... Univision News correspondent Claudia Mendoza ... CNI member María de Jesús "Marichuy" Patricio Martínez ... filmmaker Guillermo del Toro

--**C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: Former FCC senior adviser and Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law and Policy fellow Gigi Sohn ... former FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell (R) ... **"Newsmakers"**: Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), questioned by The Wall Street Journal's Siobhan Hughes and Agri-Pulse's Philip Brasher ... **"Q&A"**: WilmerHale senior associate Tiffany Wright

--**Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2r37J6h>): Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.).

***** **A message from PhRMA** : In the competitive marketplace for medicines, negotiations between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and biopharmaceutical companies result in substantial rebates and fees. According to a new report, in many cases, this system often creates incentives for PBMs to prefer medicines with higher list prices and higher rebates. Read more about how money flows through the supply chain here: <http://onphr.ma/2kgd6Nu> *****

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To: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 1:23:17 PM

From EPA

Still waiting on us to tweet out this story from NTK

http://ntknetwork.com/pruitt-promises-to-put-states-back-in-the-drivers-seat-on-regulations/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=politics

Maybe the tweet can be

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. http://ntknetwork.com/pruitt-promises-to-put-states-back-in-the-drivers-seat-on-regulations/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=politics

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:57:13 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

Definers was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor.

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

So you're saying that you ended the contract because Definers was too expensive? Because they're saying they were becoming a distraction because of the news stories.

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Emily Holden <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that

can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [<mailto:eholden@politico.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

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[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 12/11/2017 11:24:39 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates: PUTIN in Syria -- WSJ: Some will pay 100 percent marginal rate -- WHERE IS ROY MOORE? -- SPOTTED: Jared and Ivanka take the kids skating -- B'DAYS: John Kerry and Max Baucus

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

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Driving the Day

NEW IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- AP at 3:41 a.m.: "RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) - Saudi Arabia announces that movie theaters will open in the kingdom next year, for the first time in more than 35 years." ... **at 4:57 a.m.:** "MOSCOW (AP) - Tass says Russian President Vladimir Putin has arrived at a Russian air base in Syria." ... **at 5:11 a.m.:** "DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) - Syrian TV: President Bashar Assad met with Vladimir Putin at Hmeimeem base in Syria this morning."

Happy Monday. The action this week will be primarily behind the scenes. The House and Senate need to make serious progress on a bunch of fronts: they need to continue working out the differences in their tax bills, they need to figure out a deal to boost spending caps and they need to figure out how they'll fund the government past Dec. 22. President Trump is slated to give a tax speech at the Treasury Department Wednesday, per Morning Money. **HAPPENING TOMORROW -- Election Day** in Alabama.

-- CASE IN POINT: "The Taxman Cometh: Senate Bill's Marginal Rates Could Top 100% for Some," by WSJ's Rich Rubin: "Some high-income business owners could face marginal tax rates exceeding 100% under the Senate's tax bill, far beyond the listed rates in the Republican plan. That means a business owner's next \$100 in earnings, under certain circumstances, would require paying more than \$100 in additional federal and state taxes. As lawmakers rush to write the final tax bill over the next week, they already are looking at changes to prevent this from happening." <http://on.wsj.com/2AJH6p1>

AND THIS... "Precision sacrificed for speed as GOP rushes ahead on taxes," by WaPo's Erica Werner: "Republicans are moving their tax plan toward final passage at

stunning speed, blowing past Democrats before they've had time to fully mobilize against it but leaving the measure vulnerable to the types of expensive problems popping up in their massive and complex plan.

"Questionable special-interest provisions have been stuffed in along the way, out of public view and in some cases literally in the dead of night. Drafting errors by exhausted staff are cropping up and need fixes, which must be tackled by congressional negotiators working to reconcile competing versions of the legislation passed separately by the House and the Senate." <http://wapo.st/2yeGN2V>

ONE OF THE DEFINING QUESTIONS FOR 2018 -- BLOOMBERG'S SAHIL KAPUR:
"GOP's Taxing Question: Will Middle-Class Folks Notice Their Cut?": "A funny thing happened when Congress approved a tax cut for the middle class eight years ago: Most Americans didn't notice.

"The 2009 economic-stimulus bill contained a one-year tax break worth \$800 for married couples in 95 percent of working households -- a little over \$15 a week. A February 2010 poll found that just 12 percent said their taxes had been reduced. More than half, 53 percent, said they saw no change. A remarkable 24 percent thought their taxes had increased.

"Virtually nobody believed they got a tax cut," said Jared Bernstein, an economist who worked in former President Barack Obama's White House. He called it a source of frustration at the time. That 2009 tax cut contains warning signs for President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans. Their tax plans would deliver about the same level of initial relief to households with incomes between \$40,000 and \$100,000 -- roughly \$800 on average -- according to data from Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation. If those numbers hold, and if history's any guide, Trump's working-class voters may not feel the tax cut he has repeatedly promised them." <https://bloom.bg/2js7ijU>

SPOTTED: Jared and Ivanka ice skating with their children at Canal Park in Navy Yard on Sunday.

JUST POSTED -- NBC'S CAROL LEE and JULIA AINSLEY: "18 crucial days: What did the president know and when did he know it?": "Special Counsel Robert Mueller is trying to piece together what transpired inside the White House over a critical 18-day period that began when senior officials were told that National Security Advisor Michael Flynn was susceptible to blackmail by Russia, according to multiple people familiar with the matter. The questions about what happened between Jan. 26 and Flynn's firing on Feb. 13 appear to relate to possible obstruction of justice by President Donald Trump, say two people familiar with Mueller's investigation into Russia's election meddling and potential collusion with the Trump campaign.

"Multiple sources say that during interviews, Mueller's investigators have asked witnesses, including White House Counsel Don McGahn and others who have worked in the West Wing, to go through each day that Flynn remained as national security

adviser and describe in detail what they knew was happening inside the White House as it related to Flynn." <http://nbcnews.to/2A9ANtL>

ALARM BELLS -- Republicans are growing increasingly worried about the special election in Pennsylvania's 18th district. Former Republican Rep. Tim Murphy resigned after it became public that he suggested his mistress have an abortion. D.C. Republicans nominated Rick Saccone -- a state lawmaker -- to run, and Democrats have tapped Conor Lamb -- a 34-year-old former federal prosecutor who was in the Marines. The district is solidly Republican, but Republicans watching the race take shape are worried they'll have to spend money to boost Saccone. The election is in March, and it will certainly be seen as a harbinger for the midterms.

ALSO COMING UP -- Vice President Mike Pence is going to the Middle East later this month. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says he won't meet with Pence. Alyssa Farah, Pence's press secretary, said the decision is "unfortunate." ***The full statement*** <http://bit.ly/2nPskKv>

-- **"Palestinian stabs Israeli in Jerusalem; anti-Trump protest flares in Beirut,"** by Reuters' Jeffrey Heller in Jerusalem: "A Palestinian stabbed an Israeli security guard at Jerusalem's main bus station on Sunday, police said, and violence flared near the U.S. Embassy in Beirut over U.S. President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Four days of street protests in the Palestinian territories over Trump's announcement on Wednesday have largely died down, but his overturning of long-standing U.S. policy on Jerusalem -- a city holy to Jews, Muslims and Christians -- drew more Arab warnings of potential damage to prospects for Middle East peace." <http://reut.rs/2kPR708>

DARREN SAMUELSON -- **"As Russia probes progress, one name is missing: Bannon's":** "As special Russia counsel Robert Mueller wraps up interviews with senior current and former White House staff, one name has been conspicuously absent from public chatter surrounding the probe: Steve Bannon. President Donald Trump's former White House chief strategist and campaign chief executive played critical roles in episodes that have become central to Mueller's probe as well as to multiple Hill investigations. ...

"Yet Bannon hasn't faced anywhere near the degree of public scrutiny in connection to the probe as others in Trump's inner circle, including son-in-law and White House adviser Jared Kushner - who was recently interviewed by Mueller's team - or Donald Trump Jr., who was interviewed on Capitol Hill last week about his own Russian connections. People close to Bannon, who left the White House in August and returned to his former perch as head of Breitbart News, say he's told them he doesn't have a lawyer and isn't worried about potential exposure. But others say it's inevitable he'll be called in as a witness in the ongoing investigations. He has not been publicly accused of any wrongdoing or named as a target of the investigations." <http://politi.co/2BTDAYz>

-- **"Manafort Pal Still Profiting From Mostly Silent Pro-Trump Group,"** by

Bloomberg's John McCormick and Bill Allison: "One of the biggest super political action committees backing Donald Trump's campaign has done little since the election other than pay a sizable salary to its top official, a longtime friend and business associate of the president's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort. Laurance Gay, the godfather to one of Manafort's daughters, has been paid about \$830,000 since the creation of Rebuilding American Now in June 2016. That's far more than the bosses of other pro-Trump groups, including those that have actively promoted the president's agenda."
<https://bloom.bg/2nQHteyp>

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates** : UAE airlines bought \$42 billion in US-made commercial aircraft at the 2017 Dubai Airshow. That's economic growth and jobs for Americans. The UAE-US commercial aviation relationship is a win-win deal. <http://politi.co/2AtLDMj> *****

-- NOT JUST GETTING COFFEE: "For Trump adviser at center of Russia probe, a rapid rise and dramatic fall in his ancestral land," by WaPo's Griff Witte in Athens: "This October, Papadopoulos pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his extensive efforts to connect Trump's presidential campaign with senior Russian officials. Trump has since dismissed Papadopoulos as a 'low level volunteer.' But in his ancestral homeland, the man whom Trump had named in March 2016 as one of five top foreign policy advisers and an 'excellent guy' was regarded as a critical interlocutor, first to the Trump campaign and later to the incoming Trump White House.

"He may have carried on like 'a second-rate actor in a political thriller,' as one acquaintance described his manner. But when he bragged that he had helped Trump win the presidency, many here believed it. Before his spectacular fall, he was lavishly wined and dined by local business kingpins, celebrated in official tweets and rewarded with the perks - judge in an island beauty contest - of a favorite Greek son.

"He also received access to officials at the highest levels of the Greek government, many of whom shared links to Russia and sympathies that would be unusual in other Western capitals. Kammenos, in particular, stood out both for his pro-Russian views and his determination to forge a bond with the young Trump adviser."
<http://wapo.st/2BTAtA3>

THE LATEST FROM ALABAMA -- "Did Roy Moore spend the final weekend of the campaign in Philly?" by Alex Isenstadt and Gabe Debenedetti in Mobile, Alabama: "In the last weekend of Alabama's wild special Senate election, Doug Jones barnstormed the state with A-list Democrats in a bid to turn out black voters he desperately needs to win in the deep-red state. Republican Roy Moore disappeared. Confronting accusations that he harassed or molested teenage girls, Moore hasn't held a public event since Tuesday, a decision that has perplexed some Republicans given the closeness of the race.

"Two Republicans briefed on Moore's schedule before this weekend said he intended to spend Saturday in Philadelphia at the Army-Navy football game -- a long-

planned trip that the West Point grad had insisted he would still take this year despite the election. One of those Republicans, who expressed concern about Moore's absence, said that the planned trip was discussed with Moore's campaign within the last few weeks and the candidate determined to go - case closed.

"Moore's campaign declined repeated requests to discuss his whereabouts and refused to say whether he had in fact gone to Philadelphia. His absence has baffled local and out of town reporters, some of whom staked out Moore's church on Sunday morning only to be informed that he wouldn't be attending." <http://politi.co/2AU5KEk>

-- **@mollycathwalsh**, whose Twitter bio reads: "The University of Alabama // The Tuscaloosa News & Tide Sports Intern": "I met Roy Moore a few months ago for an interview, he grabbed my hand & pulled me in & said 'aren't you a pretty little thing' - I was 20."

-- **AL.COM** (large newspaper chain) **editorial: "Our view: Conservatives should consider Senator Shelby's example"**: "In the past few weeks, we've heard story after story of conservative Alabamians frustrated and confused about their choice, worried about how to do the right thing. That worry isn't misplaced - it is a choice that matters. We urge you not to be fooled into believing this is a matter of 'liberal' vs. 'conservative.' If you care about the future of this state, this election is for you. If you are (or love) a woman, this election is for you. If you are looking for a job, if you run a business, if you worry about the future of your children, this election is for you. ...

"Moore might dismiss Shelby as part of the 'Washington establishment' But 64 percent of Alabama voters reelected Shelby a year ago. He has been Alabama's senator since 1986. He has served the state with dignity and he has never embarrassed us. His judgment of Moore is convincing. For a state's senior senator to not support his party's nominee for the other seat is almost unheard of. Historians could find just one example: from 1990, when Louisiana's Republican nominee was David Duke, a former KKK leader. Alabamians should think hard about how effective Moore can be as junior senator, with such a fissure between him and Shelby, let alone other Republicans." <http://bit.ly/2AJ3Qpl>

THE BANNON/MOORE NEXUS -- JOSH GREEN in Bloomberg, "How Steve Bannon Rescued Roy Moore's Campaign Against All Odds": "He's the counter to the 'fake news' - he's been a stalwart," says Roy Moore. "It's helped us a lot. He's the master strategist." ... Bannon was most alarmed by [Sean] Hannity's ultimatum to Moore and moved to intervene, according to three people familiar with his actions. Along with Breitbart's Washington editor, Matthew Boyle, he besieged the Fox News host with phone calls and texts. Bannon ... asked the Fox host not to call on Moore to withdraw and instead to let Alabama voters decide, said people familiar with Bannon's activities. One of the people said Hannity was skeptical, but willing to listen. The person said Hannity texted Boyle, 'You pull this off it's a f-ing miracle.'" <https://bloom.bg/2A9hLno>

SUCCESS -- @KFILE: "I was curious about the WaPo anecdote about

@GOPChairwoman dropping her middle name at Trump's request. Check out her Twitter name in December vs. May. 'Romney' was dropped." **With screenshots**
<http://bit.ly/2B1EHYU>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- The president is having lunch with VP Mike Pence and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. He will participate in the presentation of the Friends of Zion award. He will also meet with House Transportation Chairman Bill Shuster before signing a space policy directive. Trump will also participate in the swearing in ceremony for Jamie McCourt to be the next Ambassador to France and Monaco.

FIRST LOOK -- The University of Chicago's Institute of Politics is announcing six fellows for the winter quarter: **McKay Coppins**, author and staff writer at The Atlantic ... **Shomik Dutta** and **Betsy Hoover**, the co-founders of Higher Ground Labs ... **Kirsten Lodal**, CEO and co-founder of anti-poverty group LIFT ... **Eboo Patel**, founder and president of the Interfaith Youth Core ... **Jay Roach**, director and producer of the films "All The Way," "Game Change," and "Recount." <http://politi.co/2ydV3bT>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) raises the arm of Alabama Democratic Senate nominee Doug Jones while speaking at Jones' campaign headquarters in Birmingham, Ala. on Dec. 10. | Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

SUSAN GLASSER: "Ex-Spy Chief: Russia's Election Hacking Was An 'Intelligence Failure'": "The politics of spying in America has never been more intense. President Trump has taken to publicly bashing his intelligence agencies and continues, a full year later, to question their conclusion that Russia intervened in the 2016 U.S. election on his behalf. For their part, an array of career spooks have come out of the shadows where they spent their careers to challenge the commander-in-chief in once unthinkable public terms.

"Michael Morell is one of the career types who's broken with decades of practice to confront Trump. A veteran of nearly three decades in the CIA, Morell rose from within the ranks to become the agency's longtime deputy director, twice serving as its acting leader before retiring during President Barack Obama's second term. In the summer of 2016, he broke with tradition to endorse Hillary Clinton over Trump, and he has continued to sound the alarm ever since.

"But in a revealingly self-critical and at times surprising interview for this week's Global POLITICO, Morell acknowledges that he and other spy-world critics of the president failed to fully 'think through' the negative backlash generated by their going

political. 'There was a significant downside,' Morell said in the interview."
<http://politi.co/2C2eurr> ... **Listen to the full podcast** <http://apple.co/2kAoZfH>

WHAT TRUMP DOESN'T MUCH CARE ABOUT -- NYT: "Mohammad Javad Zarif: Europe Must Work With Iran" <http://nyti.ms/2yZZ5IB>

NEW IN FOGGY BOTTOM -- "White House Names Trump Loyalist to Iran Policy Job at State Department: The Trump administration's pick for the Iran post will likely back a more aggressive stance," by Foreign Policy's Robbie Gramer and Dan de Luce: "Andrew L. Peek, a former captain in the U.S. Army Reserve and member of the president's State Department transition team, will become the new deputy assistant secretary of state covering Iran and Iraq, according to three State Department officials familiar with the matter.

"Peek, a former U.S. Army intelligence officer, has no prior diplomatic experience and has not earned a reputation as an established expert on Iran or Iraq but has years of experience in military intelligence and in the Senate, where he served Republican senators on foreign-policy issues." <http://atfp.co/2yeHf0J>

NEXT UP -- "How Trump will target the federal safety net," by Andrew Restuccia, Sarah Ferris and Helena Bottemiller Evich: "The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are hoping to make the most sweeping changes to federal safety net programs in a generation, using legislation and executive actions to target recipients of food stamps, Medicaid and housing benefits. The White House is quietly preparing a sweeping executive order that would mandate a top-to-bottom review of the federal programs on which millions of poor Americans rely. And GOP lawmakers are in the early stages of crafting legislation that could make it more difficult to qualify for those programs. ... The White House's leading advocate for a welfare overhaul, Domestic Policy Council Deputy Director Paul Winfree, is slated to leave the administration on Friday, according to a person familiar with the move." <http://politi.co/2B1jE8W>

-- "U.S. Sets January Push for \$1 Trillion Infrastructure Revamp," by WSJ's Ted Mann: "The White House is preparing to roll out a long-delayed infrastructure rebuilding plan in January, as President Donald Trump's advisers bet that voters want a \$1 trillion road-and-bridge-building plan-even though it is opposed by some lawmakers. Mr. Trump's advisers are putting finishing touches on a plan to direct federal spending of \$200 billion or more -- funds it would propose to offset with cuts elsewhere in the federal budget -- to leverage hundreds of billions more from local governments and private investors to pay for road, rail, water and utility upgrades." <http://on.wsj.com/2A8p0vN>

******* A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** Boeing is the preferred supplier for UAE commercial aviation requirements. Over the past 10 years, UAE customers have ordered \$150 billion in Boeing planes, supporting 781,000 jobs in the US and injecting billions of dollars into the US economy. In 2016, the US had a \$19 billion trade surplus with the UAE, America's third largest trade surplus globally.
<http://politi.co/2AtLDMj> *****

YEAR ONE -- "Trump Takes Credit for Killing Hundreds of Regulations That Were Already Dead," by Bloomberg's Alan Levin and Jesse Hamilton: "As the Trump administration nears its one-year mark, White House officials are touting cuts to regulations as one of their top achievements. 'In the history of our country, no president, during their entire term, has cut more regulations than we've cut,' President Donald Trump said last month. ... But government records-and in some cases the agencies carrying out Trump's policies-tell a very different story. For one thing, only a handful of regulations have actually been taken off the books. ...

"The White House says it has killed or stalled 860 pending regulations. It's done this by withdrawing 469, listing another 109 as inactive and relegating 282 to 'long term.' A Bloomberg News review has found even those claims are exaggerated. Hundreds of the pending regulations had been effectively shelved before Trump took office. Others listed as withdrawn are actually still being developed by federal agencies. Still more were moot because the actions sought in a pending rule were already in effect."

<https://bloom.bg/2yet0ZR>

YIKES -- "Microbes by the ton: Officials see weapons threat as North Korea gains biotech expertise," by WaPo's Joby Warrick: "North Korea is moving steadily to acquire the essential machinery that could potentially be used for an advanced bioweapons program, from factories that can produce microbes by the ton, to laboratories specializing in genetic modification, according to U.S. and Asian intelligence officials and weapons experts. Meanwhile, leader Kim Jong Un's government also is dispatching its scientists abroad to seek advanced degrees in microbiology, while offering to sell biotechnology services to the developing world. The gains have alarmed U.S. analysts, who say North Korea ... could quickly surge into industrial-scale production of biological pathogens if it chooses to do so." <http://wapo.st/2ydZ6oQ>
filler

Playbookers

PLAYBOOK HOLIDAY PARTY GUIDE: Monday: AEI has its annual holiday reception at its HQ on Massachusetts Avenue. ... **Tuesday:** MediaDC has its holiday party at Teddy and the Bully bar. ... Google has its "Big Moments of 2017" party on the rooftop of the W Hotel ... Musicians On Call, the Recording Industry Association of America and Spotify are hosting their holiday charity benefit featuring Fifth Harmony at the 9:30 Club. ... UnitedHealth Group is hosting a holiday reception at its new "D.C. Innovation Center." ...

... **Wednesday:** America Rising and Definers have their holiday party at AJAX. ... Locust Street Group have their holiday party at the Showroom. ... The Entertainment Software Association holds their holiday party at the Rock and Roll Hotel. ... **Thursday:** The Senate Press Secretaries Association and National Confectioners Association have

a "cocktails and candy canes" party at Acqua AI 2. ... The National Association of Manufacturers have a party at their HQ.

HOLIDAY PARTY CIRCUIT -- SPOTTED at Gloria Dittus' annual holiday party last night at her house: David Leiter (wearing reindeer antlers), Laura Lovelace, Mary Kathryn and Michael Steel, Bill Miller, James Sonne, Christopher Gindlesperger, Carol Danko, Kenny Day, Madeleine O'Connor, Rebecca and Matt Haller, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Leslie Sarasin, Lisa Nelson, Heather Podesta, Jay Timmons, Stewart Verdery, Ken Cole, Jay Vroom, Joe Crowley, Amy Walter and Margaret Carlson.

-- Home Depot's **Kent Knutson** and GE's **Karen Knutson** hosted their annual Christmas party at their home Saturday night "complete with two Scottish bartenders in kilts pouring single malt scotch and the whole Knutson clan wearing matching red plaid."
SPOTTED: Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and husband Verne Martell, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Heather Podesta and Steve Kessler, Catherine and Wayne Reynolds, Ziad Ojakli, Gloria Dittus, Paul Tetreault, Lois Romano, Josh Eastright, Jodi Bond, Mark Neuman, former Maryland AG Doug Gansler, Sara Fagen, Shannon Finley, Juleanna Glover, John Rogers, Jay Timmons, Earl Comstock, Nancy Dorn, Will Ris, HP Goldfield, Katy Cannon.

-- **SPOTTED** at Democratic strategist Steve Elmendorf's annual holiday party this weekend: Tom Nides, Eric Fanning and Ben Masri-Cohen, Joe Solmonese, Adrienne Elrod, Betsy Barrett, Eric Schultz, Jeremy Peters, Jeff Marootian, Michael LaRosa, Stuart Spencer, Erin McPike, Doug Thornell, Joe Wall, Michael Sozan.

TRANSITIONS -- Kris Perry will become president of the Save the Children Action Network. **Mark Shriver** will become CEO.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Alex Koppelman, senior editor for media at CNN

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: John Feehery, partner at EFB Advocacy, is 54. **How he got his start in politics:** "I started as an intern with House Minority Leader Bob Michel. Working for Bob and his team (Ray LaHood, Bill Pitts, Bill Gavin etc.) was the most formative political experience of my life. My internship shortly became a full-time job and I would eventually write speeches for Bob and for a group of members dubbed the Theme Team. He was a great leader and a wonderful human being and he quickly became a role model for me." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2C23dr3>

BIRTHDAYS: former Secretary of State John Kerry is 74 ... Max Baucus, former U.S. ambassador to China and senator from Montana, is 76 ... Kara Swisher ... Claudia Slacik ... Politico's Marianne LeVine ... Joe Greeley, director of production at Advoc8 ... Perry Rosen ... Josh Brown, president at DP Strategies Group and partner at Dark Horse Strategy (hat tip: Jeremy Ilouliau) ... Washington Examiner's Kelly Cohen ... Benton Strong is 31 ... Elizabeth Spiers ... Gideon Resnick of The Daily Beast ... Bruce Thomas ... Rebecca Brocato ... Jessica Seale, digital director for Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (h/t Becca Glover) ... Emily Buchanan, executive director at SBA List ...

Seymour Topping is 96 ... WaPo's Elizabeth Dwoskin ...

... **Annabelle Timsit**, editorial fellow at the Atlantic ... Tyler Daniel, Rep. Steve Scalise's political director ... Allison Fleming ... Edelman's Kirstie Fleger ... Gabe Amo ... Phillip Escoriza ... Gordon Peterson ... Tim McClellan ... Erika Dimmler ... Peter True, press secretary for Senate Energy Dems ... Rita Moreno ... J. Michael Allen ... Julie Mason, host of SiriusXM's "Press Pool" ... Miyamoto Musashi ... Josh Morton of Jericho Pix ... Steve Gillon ... Chris Stenrud ... Max Schindler ... Brian Reich is 4-0 ... Devon Lucie ... Mark Ashworth is 58 ... Fran Boyd ... Robert Wascher ... Benjamin Tribbett is 38 ... Bob Corn ... Ashley Spillane ... Pam Womack ... Seth Johnson (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** UAE airlines have received or have on order more than 800 Boeing aircraft. Emirates is the world's largest operator of Boeing 777s and has 40 Boeing 787-10s currently on order. Flydubai operates an all-Boeing fleet of planes and has a total of 361 Boeing 737s on order. Etihad operates 24 Boeing 777s with 25 more on order, and has an additional \$8.7 billion order for Boeing 787-10s. UAE airlines now serve 11 US gateway cities from Dubai and Abu Dhabi with more than 250 weekly nonstop flights. <http://politi.co/2AtLDMj>

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]
From: Block, Molly
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 6:33:29 PM
Subject: RE: From the Weekly Standard

Follow up: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883>

Editorial: There's No Scandal at the EPA

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the *New York Times* published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the *Times* straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Definers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point

ignored by the *Times* in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt's team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an "authoritarian" regime wanted to "hunt down ideological subversives," it wouldn't use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The *Times* is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that "transparency matters a lot to me" might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often "transparency" only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

From: Bowman, Liz

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 4:27 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Bennett, Tate <Bennett.Tate@epa.gov>; Lyons, Troy <lyons.troy@epa.gov>

Subject: Fwd: From the Weekly Standard

Full article

To: Milbourn, Cathy[Milbourn.Cathy@epa.gov]
Cc: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 1:36:01 PM
Subject: Re: Weekly Round-Up Release

If you want to do it when you get in that would be great. We just need a draft by 10:30.

Sent from my iPhone

On May 12, 2017, at 9:30 AM, Milbourn, Cathy <Milbourn.Cathy@epa.gov> wrote:

Jahan. I'm on my way shortly. Was up early getting a release out--unless John wants me to do this from home.

Sent from my iPhone
Cathy Milbourn
Office of Media Relations
202-564-7849
202-420-8648

On May 12, 2017, at 9:16 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Cathy, can we get this into a release and sent to John, Liz and I please? Thank you!

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund site, it was a successful week at the EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. “Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009.”

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no ‘environmental savior,’ and his administration accomplished nothing. *“Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration’s attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama’s tenure.”*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *“Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. ‘What’s so great about that record,’ he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. ‘I don’t quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.’”*

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because ‘they exceeded their statutory authority.’ ‘They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.’”*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *“Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA’s failure to fix Flint’s water system.”*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors. *“The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will*

apply, I'm sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it's the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board."

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. "Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on "cooperative federalism" and working with the states."

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. "[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues."

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. "Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota's ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery."

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. "If you go back to the inception of the agency... Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,' EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. 'The past administration simply disregarded that,' he continued."

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. "Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state's relationship with that federal agency. 'The days of coercive federalism are over,' new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum."

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. "Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president's new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota."

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott

Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule.”

Oklahoma City’s KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. “The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... ‘Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump administration,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma’s attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump’s administration.”

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:57:46 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

No. Definers was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor.

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

So you're saying that you ended the contract because Definers was too expensive? Because they're saying they were becoming a distraction because of the news stories.

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Emily Holden <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that

can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [<mailto:eholden@politico.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM

To: Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Wed 6/28/2017 1:27:59 PM
Subject: UPDATED DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2017

**UPDATED DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017**

UPDATE: Press Secretary Sean Spicer will give an off-camera briefing at 1:30PM.

In the morning, President Donald J. Trump will receive his daily intelligence briefing. The President will then lead a tribal, State, and local energy roundtable. In the afternoon, the President will participate in a meet and greet with the Chicago Cubs. The President will then meet with immigration crime victims to urge passage of House legislation to save American lives. In the evening, the President will depart the White House en route to the Trump International Hotel, where he will give remarks at the Republican National Committee dinner. The President will then return to the White House.

-

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP

TV Corr & Crew: ABC

Print: The Root

Radio: Sirius XM

EDT

9:00AM **In-Town Travel Pool Call Time**

10:30AM **THE PRESIDENT receives his daily intelligence briefing**

Oval Office

Closed Press

11:30AM **THE PRESIDENT leads a tribal, State, and local energy
roundtable**

Roosevelt Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 11:20AM – Briefing Room Doors)

2:00PM **THE PRESIDENT participates in a meet and greet with the
Chicago Cubs**

Roosevelt Room

Closed Press

3:00PM THE PRESIDENT meets with immigration crime victims to urge passage of House legislation to save American lives

Cabinet Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 2:50PM – Briefing Room Doors)

6:50PM THE PRESIDENT departs the White House en route to the Trump International Hotel

South Portico

In-Town Travel Pool

8:00PM THE PRESIDENT gives remarks at the Republican National Committee dinner

Trump International Hotel

Closed Press

8:30PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Portico

In-Town Travel Pool

Briefing Schedule

1:30PM Press Briefing with Press Secretary Sean Spicer

White House Briefing Room

Off-Camera

###

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To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Lynn, Tricia
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 6:55:49 PM
Subject: Media Clips, 12/18/17

NY Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/17/us/politics/epa-pruitt-media-monitoring.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FEnvironmental%20Protection%20Agency>

E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email.

By Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman, 12/17/17

WASHINGTON — One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an “environmental catastrophe.” Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

The requests came from a Virginia-based lawyer working with America Rising, a Republican campaign research group that specializes in helping party candidates and conservative groups find damaging information on political rivals, and which, in this case, was looking for information that could undermine employees who had criticized the E.P.A.

Now a company affiliated with America Rising, named Definers Public Affairs, has been hired by the E.P.A. to provide “media monitoring,” in a move the agency said was intended to keep better track of newspaper and video stories about E.P.A. operations nationwide.

But the sequence of events has created a wave of fear among employees, particularly those already subject to special scrutiny, who said official assurances hardly put them at ease.

“This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment,” said Gary Morton, an E.P.A. employee in Philadelphia, who works on preventing spills from underground storage tanks. His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts. “What they are doing is trying to intimidate and bully us into silence,” he said.

The contract with Definers comes at a time of heightened tension between the news media and the Trump administration. Within the E.P.A., the move is also part of a bellicose media strategy

that has been helped at key moments by America Rising — even before its affiliate was hired by the agency.

An E.P.A. official vehemently defended the \$120,000 contract to Definers, saying it filled a need in the media office for an improved clipping service.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor, and they are providing no other services,” a spokesman for the E.P.A., Jahan Wilcox, wrote in an email.

Joe Pounder, a founder of Definers Public Affairs, said several government agencies had contacted his firm about its news-tracking tool, called Definers Console, because they were seeking a service that does a better job of keeping up with the fast-paced news cycle, including tracking of live-streamed videos. He said that agency staff members familiar with the company’s work approached the firm about putting forward a bid and that Mr. Pruitt himself was not, to his knowledge, involved in the decision to select Definers.

“I hope E.P.A. employees realize after a few months that we are providing a really great and invaluable service that advances their mission,” Mr. Pounder said.

Joe Pounder’s company, Definers Public Affairs, has been hired to do media monitoring for the Environmental Protection Agency.

He and Matt Rhoades, his partner at Definers Public Affairs, also started America Rising. The two entities share several top executives, including Allan L. Blutstein, the lawyer who prepared the Freedom of Information Act requests aimed at the E.P.A. employees.

Some Republicans who previously worked for the agency said the hiring of Definers Public Affairs sent a worrisome message to employees already on edge and fearful of retaliation.

“Mr. Pruitt appears not to understand that the two most valuable assets E.P.A. has is the country’s trust and a very committed professional work force,” said William K. Reilly, the E.P.A. administrator under George Bush. “This shows complete insensitivity, complete tone-deafness, or something worse.”

Liz Mair, president of a Republican consulting firm, said that the relatively small dollar amount of the contract was an indication that all the agency was buying was a clipping service, and not some kind of sophisticated intelligence-gathering on employees. But she added that certain E.P.A. staff members actually merited more scrutiny.

“A lot of funky stuff has been going on with E.P.A. staff,” she said.

Mr. Blutstein said in an interview on Friday that his requests to the agency tracked employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt. He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt’s work.

“It was more of a fishing expedition on my part,” he said of the at least 20 Freedom of Information requests he submitted, most for E.P.A. employees who were union leaders or had spoken critically of agency management since Mr. Pruitt’s arrival.

Even before the E.P.A. hired Definers, the group of companies, political action committees and nonprofit organizations affiliated with America Rising had frequently drafted news releases that put Mr. Pruitt and his policies in a positive light and attacked the administrator’s critics. Many items, including video clips, also appeared on NTK Network, a for-profit digital news aggregator that Mr. Pounder founded.

In addition to sharing at least nine current and former executives, Definers Public Affairs shares an office building in Arlington, Va., with the multiple arms of America Rising and NTK Network.

E.P.A. staff members said in interviews that they had the right, as private citizens or members of a federal employees’ union, to publicly discuss concerns about changes taking place at the agency under Mr. Pruitt’s management. Some noted that “media monitoring” could be expected to include tracking of statements made on Twitter and other social media platforms, including potentially critical comments agency staff members make about E.P.A. management.

Tracking E.P.A. Employees

The Environmental Protection Agency has hired a new contractor, Definers Public Affairs, to do media monitoring for the agency. But before the contract was awarded, staff members who work for the contractor had been conducting surveillance-type work on E.P.A. employees critical of Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, and President Trump.

Michael Cox, who worked at the E.P.A.’s Seattle regional office for 25 years, learned this weekend from an article in The New York Times that he had been among the employees under scrutiny.

Mr. Cox wrote to Mr. Pruitt in March — on the day of Mr. Cox’s retirement from the agency — to tell him that he was “increasingly alarmed about the direction of E.P.A. under your leadership,” and to urge Mr. Pruitt to “step back and listen to career E.P.A. staff,” the letter said.

Just 10 days later, a Freedom of Information request came in seeking Mr. Cox’s correspondence on the day of his resignation. The request led to the production of 62 documents, detailing the names of dozens of agency officials, as well as a note he sent to his work colleagues specifically noting that he knew they shared his concerns with how the agency is being managed — names that would now be listed for anyone reviewing the response.

Some of the emails requested under the Freedom of Information Act were efforts to find documents critical of the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt. Credit Pete Marovich/Getty Images

“That does not make me feel very good,” he said, knowing that his emails could potentially be used against other employees.

Nicole Cantello, an E.P.A. lawyer in Chicago who has helped lead a series of enforcement actions against major air polluters in the Midwest, and whose emails also were requested, said the agency’s decision to hire Definers caused great concern.

“Now that they are working for the agency, will they have access to agency computers and perhaps try to come after me in a whole bunch of different ways?” she said. “And will they turn over their opposition research materials on us to agency officials? I just don’t know. It is very scary. Very, very scary.”

Several of the Freedom of Information requests submitted by Mr. Blustein ask for correspondence between agency employees and members of Congress — such as Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Democrat of Rhode Island, and Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts — who have been critical of Mr. Pruitt.

“We have seen a lot of nefarious activities from Trump,” Mr. Whitehouse said. “But hiring a fossil fuel front group that specializes in political hits and is doing F.O.I.A. investigations of your agency’s own employees is a new low.”

E.P.A. employees are not the only ones who have been subjects of the group’s Freedom of Information Act requests. Mr. Blustein also has sought emails and other information from at least two climate scientists, Katharine Hayhoe of Texas Tech University and Robert Kopp of Rutgers University, who worked on a sweeping government climate change report. The Trump administration cleared the report for publication earlier this year.

“They’re asking for emails related to a document that has already been public and has been reviewed twice by E.P.A. and was ultimately approved by E.P.A.?” Ms. Hayhoe asked. “What do they think they’re going to find?”

The nonprofit arm of America Rising, known as America Rising Squared, oversees some of the group’s most controversial work on climate change: deploying “trackers” to videotape activists like Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, and Tom Steyer, the billionaire investor and Democratic donor.

“This is classic propaganda from an authoritarian regime,” Mr. Steyer said. “It’s distressing that it would even happen in the United States of America.”

Brian Rogers, executive director of America Rising Squared and a senior vice president at Definers, would not say who paid for the surveillance. In an emailed statement, he said that the firm had focused on Mr. Steyer and Mr. McKibben because they “aggressively target conservative thought leaders” for scrutiny.

“America Rising Squared is committed to ensuring a balanced debate, and providing a conservative perspective on the issues and actors involved,” Mr. Rogers said.

Mr. Reilly, the former E.P.A. administrator, said the whole sequence of incidents — and now the agency's involvement in it — was deeply disturbing.

“These are committed people,” he said of the agency employees. “It’s not just a job for them. To put their morale and their good standing in danger is going to risk losing something very valuable to the government and to the country.”

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365379-epa-employees-who-criticized-administration-had-emails-scrutinized>

EPA employees who criticized administration had emails scrutinized: report

By Brett Samuels, 12/17/17, 8:30 PM

Employees of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who spoke up about Trump administration policies had their emails scrutinized by a lawyer working for a Republican campaign research group, according to a report published Sunday by The New York Times.

That research group, America Rising, is affiliated with another company that has been hired by the EPA to do "media monitoring," raising concerns among agency employees that the agency is clamping down on those with dissenting views, the newspaper reported.

According to The Times, three employees said they spoke up, either during meetings, in letters or through public demonstrations, to express concerns about the direction of the EPA under Trump. Days later, the lawyer affiliated with America Rising submitted requests for the employees' emails that mentioned either EPA chief Scott Pruitt, the newspaper reported.

“This is a witch hunt against EPA employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment,” one employee told The Times.

America Rising is affiliated with Definers Corp., a research firm based in Arlington, Va. The EPA is paying that company \$120,000 to use a media-tracking tool to follow media coverage of its clients.

The Times reported on Saturday that Allan Blutstein, a vice president for Definers Public

Affairs, has submitted dozens of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the EPA since the beginning of Trump's presidency, many of which target agency employees who are known to be critical of the administration.

The moves come amid heightened tensions between the media and President Trump's administration. The president frequently refers to mainstream media outlets as "fake news."

Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer earlier this year denied that Trump administration officials were keeping "dossiers" on White House reporters.

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The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365222-epa-consultant-executive-is-investigating-employees-critical-of>

EPA consultant is investigating anti-Trump 'resistance' within the agency: report

By Max Greenwood, 12/16/17, 8:26 AM

A top executive at a consulting firm hired by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration.

The New York Times reported that Allan Blutstein, a vice president for Definers Public Affairs, has submitted dozens of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the EPA since the beginning of Trump's presidency, many of which target agency employees who are known to be critical of the administration.

"I wondered if they were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this," Blutstein told the Times in an interview. "And did they do anything that would be useful for Republicans."

He said he was looking into "resistance" figures in the government. But Blutstein said that his FOIA requests were not related to the work his firm is doing for the agency, and that he took on what he described to the Times as the "antiresistance" effort on his own.

"I am not doing mole hunts, or whatever," Blutstein said. "I am almost always doing that research on my own."

Definers, which specializes in opposition research, was hired by the EPA earlier this month on a \$120,000 contract to help monitor media coverage at the agency. Mother Jones first reported the

contract award.

Jahan Wilcox, a spokesman for the EPA, said in a statement to the Times that the decision to hire Definers was because the firm was significantly less expensive than the firm previously contracted to do the work.

"Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services," he said. "If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them."

CNN

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/17/opinions/cdc-banned-words-opinion-fisher/index.html>

OPINION: Trump's administration's seven banned words are an attack on science

By Nicole Alexander Fisher, 12/17/17, 6:59 PM

On Thursday, according to the Washington Post, policy analysts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were told by others in the Trump administration that the use of seven specific words and phrases would be prohibited. On the list are the words "vulnerable," "diversity," "entitlement," "transgender," "fetus," "evidence-based," and "science-based." The decision has not only been deemed as reckless and dangerous, but an offense to the scientific community.

This goes far beyond an attack on lexicon or word-choice. A ban on words not only creates barriers for scientists who need to communicate, but also breaks public trust in the areas they are meant to investigate and research.

Banning the word "fetus" will embolden the pro-life communities who oppose abortion, while at the same time jeopardizing some of critical studies from the CDC that study the effects of disease, such as Zika, on the fetus specifically. Similarly, banning "transgender" and "diversity" energizes the ideals of white nationalism and attacks on already vulnerable communities. It also ignores or diminishes the health regimens that are specific to transgender individuals -- and may only create further complications for them.

The current director of the CDC, Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, who was appointed by the Trump administration in July, has since responded on Twitter, claiming that there are "no banned words at the CDC", and that "the CDC has a long standing history of making public health and budget decisions that are based on the best available science and data for the benefit of all people."

A spokesman of the Department of Health and Human Services, the parent department of the CDC, responded similarly, saying that a 'word ban' was a "complete mischaracterization."

Despite these denials, it's not hard to believe the Washington Post story. After all, this would not be the Trump administration's first attack on scientists or their abilities to communicate to the public. Since his days on the campaign trail, Donald Trump has denied, belittled or argued against the impacts of climate change. And ever since he assumed the office of the presidency, he has not only surrounded himself and his cabinet with climate change skeptics, but has taken action to suppress scientific action and thought.

In January, the Trump administration issued a gag order on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees, making it much harder for them to communicate with the public. Memos were issued that forbid any officials from making social media posts or speaking with journalists. While it is standard for a new administration to make changes to websites to reflect policy positions, nearly all mentions of climate change policy were scrubbed from the websites and replaced with statements regarding the roll back of climate change regulation.

In March, the Department of Energy (DOE) banned staff members from using the phrases "climate change" or "Paris Agreement" within any of their communications. The DOE and the Department of Interior further scrubbed information about renewable energy and climate change from their websites.

The Trump administration has also been notoriously aggressive on environmental regulations, repeatedly rolling back, rejecting or delaying environmentally related protections or funding. Climate change language has been removed from reports, such as a United States Geological Survey report that linked sea level rise and climate change. And, in June, President Donald Trump announced that the United States would formally withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, making the US one of the only countries not a signatory to the accord.

The attack on science plays into this administration's assault on facts. By bolstering conspiracy theories, riling up white nationalists and declaring war on various news outlets, Trump has created an environment where science can be politicized, where environmental regulations are simply more burdensome governmental overreach and where any disagreement or dissatisfaction with facts and figures can be decried as "fake news."

As long as the Trump administration is willing to cater to fear and bigotry, religious zealots, and a hatred or distrust of government, Trump's base will continue to vote for elected officials who actively work against the safety and well-being of our environment. And, in turn, this will leave elected officials free to act in the interests of any corporations or individuals who may have contributed to their campaigns.

As Americans, we must hold strong to the ideals of education, research, science and innovation -- and not backpedal any further to appease the potential financial gains of wealthy individuals or the narrow-minded conscience of an uninformed electorate. Censoring language, hampering research and suppressing scientific endeavors will only cripple our country and harm the planet. We cannot erase the already-fatal impacts of climate change by simply removing the words from a governmental website.

"To distribute a list of banned words to a scientific agency is simply not what we do in the United States of America," said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii. "Every American has to stand up against this. Republicans too, and maybe especially."

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Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/daily-on-energy-trump-to-ignore-climate-change-in-national-security-strategy/article/2177064>

TRUMP WILL IGNORE CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

By John Siciliano and Josh Siegel, 12/18/17, 11:18 AM

President Trump will call for greater border security and better trade deals, but ignore climate change, in a national security strategy document to be released Monday.

Unlike Obama: The strategy document, which administrations must send to Congress, drops former President Barack Obama's description of climate change as a national security threat.

Limited climate references: Instead of describing climate change as a national security threat, the document will discuss "environmental stewardship."

Trump also will mention climate change in a section on embracing U.S. "energy dominance," according to the New York Times.

Mixed signals: The release of the strategy comes after Trump last week signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, which called climate change a "direct threat" and requires the Pentagon to create a list of the top 10 most at-risk bases.

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Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/daily-on-energy-trump-to-ignore-climate-change-in-national-security-strategy/article/2177064>

GROUPS SUE EPA'S PRUITT OVER DELAY OF COAL POLLUTION RULES

By John Siciliano and Josh Siegel, 12/18/17, 11:18 AM

Conservation groups and national park advocates joined with environmentalists in suing Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt over his delay in enforcing the Obama administration rules to reduce regional haze that place coal plants in the crosshairs.

"In 2016, EPA proposed a strong plan to clean up dangerous pollutants from more than a dozen Texas coal plants and other polluting facilities," the National Parks Conservation Association said Friday. "Administrator Pruitt's EPA abandoned the proposal by October 2017, instead putting forward a plan that grants polluters a license to emit even more pollution into the air despite vocal opposition."

Detailing their legal claims: The parks group will hold a call with reporters Monday to discuss its legal strategy in opposing Pruitt, as well as pushing back against Texas' coal plans that they argue avoid pollution standards.

Green lawyers level suit: The national park group is represented by environmental lawyers with Earthjustice and the Sierra Club's Environmental Law Program in filing their challenge in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Texas is 'unlawful.' They also filed a petition for reconsideration to the EPA that asserts that the agency's Texas Regional Haze plan "is unlawful and will do little to actually clean up pollution

from Texas' coal plants as it was originally intended to do.”

Bloomberg Environment

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125183580&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

EPA to Kick Off Clean Power Plan Replacement Squabble

By Abby Smith, 12/18/17

The fate of the first-ever carbon limits for power plants will get clearer soon, as the EPA invites recommendations on how or whether to replace one of the Obama administration's signature environmental regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency's advance notice seeking comment on any possible replacement for the Clean Power Plan cleared White House interagency review Dec. 14, signaling its imminent release.

The EPA proposed Oct. 10 to repeal the Clean Power Plan, arguing the regulation exceeded the agency's authority by basing standards on measures beyond steps utilities could take to curb emissions at individual power plants.

The agency said then it hadn't determined whether it will replace the Obama-era rule but indicated it would seek comment on options that fit within the EPA's narrower interpretation of its Clean Air Act authority.

Many utility and industry groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, have in recent months urged the EPA to craft a narrow replacement rule to lock in regulatory certainty.

Environmentalists and other Clean Power Plan supporters, however, argue any Trump EPA replacement would not achieve sufficient emissions reductions, and they have vowed to defend the Obama administration's rule.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069221/search?keyword=EPA>

White House huddles with industry on climate deal

By Zack Colman, 12/18/17

A White House official met with an industry group last week to discuss how to move forward on an international treaty to phase out greenhouse gas emissions from refrigerants, sources told E&E News.

Representatives from the Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) met with White House energy aide George David Banks and John Thompson, a State Department official, regarding the Kigali Amendment, named for the Rwandan capital where it was finalized in 2016 with the support of the Obama administration.

AHRI supports the amendment.

The White House has not yet submitted the amendment for Senate ratification. But the path forward for the amendment got complicated in August when a federal court scrapped an Obama-era rule to limit hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a class of climate superpollutants that the Kigali policy targets.

While the Trump administration signaled support for the treaty last month, it still must either issue a new rule through U.S. EPA or seek to overturn the federal court decision, which is being appealed (*Climatewire*, Nov. 29). Congress also could pass legislation to that effect (*Climatewire*, Aug. 9).

What EPA intends to do is unclear. The agency didn't have a representative in the meeting.

"The only thing I would say is if you think about who should be there and who is not there, then you know who they have to get through," AHRI spokesman Francis Dietz said.

Some familiar with the matter say EPA has been more difficult to court because Kigali is about climate change, a topic EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has been keen to avoid. The amendment to the Montreal Protocol seeks a drawdown of HFCs on a tiered approach. Developed countries like the United States must begin hitting goals in 2019 that gradually grow more stringent.

Proponents have instead framed the issue as a business opportunity, as U.S. air conditioning manufacturers contend they're poised to benefit in the marketplace because they have the global lead in substitute technology.

"I think that the industry is doing a fantastic job of making the business case for this, which I think is the strongest case," said Andrew Light, a former State Department climate adviser who is now at the World Resources Institute.

EPA referred E&E News to the White House for comment.

"No announcements at this time," White House spokeswoman Kelly Love said in an email.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069217/search?keyword=EPA>

Interview: Wyo. Governor wants to address climate to help coal

By Benjamin Storrow, 12/18/17

Few politicians love coal more than Matt Mead.

The Republican governor of Wyoming has made a career of championing the industry, and for good reason. His state is the country's largest coal producer — in 2016, Wyoming accounted for about 40 percent of U.S. production. One of his biggest talking points during his 2014 re-election campaign was the number of lawsuits (12) he'd filed against U.S. EPA.

Still, he's something of an outlier among national Republicans, in that he's actively searching for solutions to address concerns about climate change. That's not to say he believes human beings are contributing to a warming planet. The governor studiously avoids that question.

Instead, Mead has long argued that it's irrelevant whether he believes in climate change. More importantly, he says, is the fact that most of the world believes climate is an issue. Coal producers and coal-reliant states need to address those concerns if they are to stay in business, Mead says.

The hallmark of the governor's quest for a coal-climate solution is the integrated test center, or the ITC. It's essentially a laboratory attached to Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Dry Fork Station, a relatively new coal-fired power plant outside the mining community of Gillette. Its purpose is to experiment with the plant's carbon emissions in hopes researchers can find some economic use for the pollution.

There already is a global market for carbon, which is used in everything from carbonation in Coke cans to graphite. Some scientists remain doubtful that carbon utilization is a solution to climate change, however. While there is a market for carbon, they note, it is relatively small compared with what coal plants emit each year.

Mead, who is in his second term and leaving office next year, is pushing ahead. His efforts are aided by the XPRIZE foundation, which is perhaps best-known for helping launch the private space industry. At its most basic, the foundation offers a prize to researchers seeking to solve a global challenge. Teams of scientists compete to develop a solution to the challenge, and the winner gets a cash prize. The hope is to spur innovation that can be adopted at a wider scale.

In the case of carbon emissions, teams are competing for total prizes worth \$20 million. The prize will be split between teams researching how to use emissions from coal and natural-gas-fired power plants.

The coal research is being done at the ITC. Construction on the facility itself is nearing completion, and teams are expected to begin research next year. The prize is scheduled to be awarded in 2020.

With the ITC nearing completion and coal dominating national headlines this year, E&E News caught up with Mead last week to talk about his efforts to promote coal as a potential solution to the climate conundrum.

Can you give an overview of where we are with the ITC today?

They're still anticipating they'll have construction completed in the next couple weeks. By the end of 2017 was their goal, and I think that's where they are.

The XPRIZE finalists are expected to be in the facility sometime next year through 2020. In addition to the construction itself, symbolically it's helped us gain some interest. I recently signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with a province in Canada [Saskatchewan] and North Dakota. It's a generalized MOU, I don't want to make too big a deal of it, to continue to collectively work on carbon capture and utilization.

It's been really nice for me as we address issues of coal to show that Wyoming's really taken a proactive stance in trying to address this issue. I'm pleased where it is. I'll be out of office when we see what the results are from the teams competing against each other.

For folks who are unaware of what the ITC is, why is this so important?

A couple of things. One, as the leading producer of coal and as we recognize that coal is still a major component of electricity production in this country and the world, we think there is not only an opportunity, but need for leadership on CO2 capture and sequestration. As you and I've discussed before, people have different positions on whether climate change is man-made or not.

My resolve coming into office is I suspect that debate may go on for a period of time. But for coal companies that are having trouble getting insurance, for coal companies that are having trouble getting finance, for coal companies that are challenged by presidential administrations that are very concerned about this issue and want to see coal diminished as a source of electricity, this is really the only way I see for Wyoming to continue to have a robust coal industry. For us to not only be leaders in production, but leaders in innovation and technology.

You and I last visited in person, I think, at Little America [a Cheyenne, Wyo., hotel and conference center], but now we're not only having these conversations with Canada, but with Japan and Taiwan, to tell them what we're working on and their interest in energy and energy sources.

It's not only going to provide us with a leadership role and what we want to do in Wyoming, it really provides us an opportunity for partnerships in the United States and many other countries in the world.

I've always felt that the political discussion and debate may continue for years, but the solution is going to come from good science, good innovation, good technology. The ITC is the program where we're hopeful the solution or part of the solution comes from.

There's a division in the coal community. Some, like Murray Energy Corp. CEO Bob Murray, say carbon capture and sequestration is a scam. What do you say in response?

Absolutely, I've heard it many times from people who do not believe in climate change, people who believe there is climate change but it is not man-made, and who do not believe, even if you assume those things are true, we ought to spend time and resources capturing CO2.

As I've said, you may not believe it. You may not want to go down that road. But when a coal company can't get insurance, when a coal company can't get financing, when globally you see with the Paris accord, almost every nation is concerned about it and does believe climate change is man-made. If we want to still sell our coal in the United States, and, equally important, if we want to sell our coal globally, we have to recognize our consumers and potential consumers are concerned about this.

You can be a complete nonbeliever, a complete skeptic, and believe in your head it's completely bogus about man-made climate change, but our consumers don't. And if you want to sell coal, you have to address at some point what consumers want.

Even if you throw all that to the side, even if we arrive at a day when CO2 is not a problem, we still have an opportunity to have a product. That's CO2 for the production of algae used in artificial sweetener, whether it's graphite, whether it's a feedstock in types of chemicals. There is a value to that we're not using now.

In a non-elegant fashion, I've said we're throwing out part of the cow here and we have a chance to utilize the whole thing. Outside the discussion of climate change and CO2's effect, if we can use more of the coal product, and it's a valuable product, why not?

Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) has a CCS bill. How important is the role of the federal government, and what are your thoughts on that particular bill?

I won't comment on that particular bill. I've not read it. I'm not trying to avoid the question, just haven't read it personally. But I will say this. A month or so ago, I was in Austin, Texas, and I had a chance to visit with Energy Secretary [Rick] Perry about this. My point, and he knows this, if you look historically over the last eight years of DOE funding, renewables have gotten the benefit of a lot more funding for research than have traditional fossil fuels.

I still think renewables play an important part, they will continue to play a part in our energy portfolio, but there ought to be some parity in research dollars between renewables and fossil fuels.

I do think it is important to have presidential administrations recognize that with such a large

percent of electricity coming from coal, we want to be in the business for the long term, not eight years or one administration, but for the next 100-plus years. As the federal government allocates resource dollars, it's important to look at one of the leading sources of electricity. That is coal.

As we've closed down coal-fired plants, as we see fuel switching to gas, I think there is an opportunity for participation on the part of the federal government. We know from the Petra Nova plant in Texas, the capture and utilization in enhanced oil recovery, that technology is there. It's doable, it will continue to be an opportunity to prove effective. But the opportunity for other products, as well, will make an additional difference in the future of coal.

It's been a busy year for coal. There's been a lot of good news on the regulatory front, and production is up. On the other hand, we continue to see plant shutdowns. How do you process these signals, and what they mean for coal and where Wyoming is headed?

I think about it a lot. Some of it is just natural competition. The amazing abundance of natural gas, which we love in Wyoming, as well, because we are a producer of natural gas, the amount of production means the price is very competitive. It's certainly better economically than coal, depending on where you are. So we'll continue to see that being a factor.

But the question is long term. Thirty percent-plus of electricity is produced by coal. That will fluctuate some in the short term, but it's still going to be a major player. As people look at this, whether it's on a short-term basis or a long-term basis, I still think coal has a future, partially just because of the amazing abundance.

And in addition to the ITC, what they're doing at the University of Wyoming is looking at coal in terms of its individual components. Not through a thermal process, but just looking at the individual chemical components and how they can be used for other things, as well. When you have this amazing resource, I think if we can find solutions with the ITC, the University of Wyoming or anywhere in the world, coal is made up of components, and how do you use those, because they're so abundant.

I am pro-coal. And when I see any coal-fired plant shut down, I do wonder about it. What I don't want is that a plant shuts down because it looks like there is no future for coal because we, collectively, are not making the necessary investment in all the improvements we can in utilization of coal.

That's why Wyoming is leading and is proud to take that step.

Eastern coal exports are up at the moment. Western exports are up, too, but it's constrained by port capacity. How much hope do you have for building coal terminals on the West Coast?

The quick answer is I do continue to hope for those Western ports. Obviously on the Longview port, we've had some stumbles and setbacks. In addition to coal-producing state interests pushing, in Montana and Wyoming, I think we'll have some additional pull from our trading partners such as South Korea and Taiwan, as they move away, Taiwan in particular, from

nuclear power. The scare from Fukushima. Their pull along with our push will provide some opportunities for those ports to open.

But simultaneously to that, the better story we can provide from research that has developed at the ITC or anywhere, I think that too will help provide some more opportunities for ports to open, where we can show we've addressed this issue in a responsible way.

How well is President Trump doing his job, and how much more can he be expected to deliver on coal?

We started at the end of President Obama's administration with the moratorium on new coal mines. And where we are now, that's gone. President Trump, certainly on the issue of coal, I think he and his administration have really provided a better news story for Wyoming and Wyoming coal.

I do hope as we look at the Clean Power Plan, 111(d), there is still, the nature of the law is, we have to come up with a plan. Companies as you saw, there was a mixed reaction to getting rid of the Clean Power Plan. Some of the companies said the law requires us to do something, let's make improvements instead of getting rid of it.

There's work to do there on where we go from here. How do we have a reasonable versus what I felt was an unreasonable plan, the Clean Power Plan. The administration is working on that now.

The other I already mentioned, if you want coal to succeed, be looking for opportunities exactly like the ITC, Tri-State Generation, the rural electric cooperatives and the state of Wyoming, because there are answers to be found. I think Wyoming can help provide those answers.

(Editor's note: Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Inc., a Colorado-based electric cooperative, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association have both contributed financially to the ITC.)

You mentioned the Clean Power Plan. You're a former U.S. attorney, is it worth trying to tackle the endangerment finding or avoid that fight and replace the CPP?

I thought there were so many fundamental flaws in the Clean Power Plan. So I think there needs to be a plan, because we'll have a change in administration at some point in the future, and they may have a different idea. The more we can do in a favorable administration, the better we will be prepared to address an administration that may not be as favorable to coal.

The Clean Power Plan, the way it was designed, the initial take was Wyoming had to reduce emissions, I'm going from memory, 23 percent. I expressed my concerns, and we went up to like a 48 [percent] reduction. We were not given credit for the improvements our coal-fired plants had made in the past. As we looked at it, we weren't going to get credit for shipping wind-generated electrons to other states. And we were going to be punished for shipping coal-generated electrons to other states. So Wyoming, I think, was in a really untenable position with that Clean Power Plan.

So starting over may be the way to go. As I said, there was fundamental flaws with that one. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't have a plan. I think there should be a plan, and better to develop it under an administration that is favorable to coal rather than one that is not. *(Editor's note: Wyoming reduction under a mass-based approach in the initial version of the Clean Power Plan was 19 percent. It was 43 percent under the final version of the rule.)*

We often hear from environmentalists that Wyoming has a tremendous wind resource and that it could benefit the state as coal use subsides. What do you say to that, and, more broadly, how much should Wyoming be planning for a low-carbon future?

I think most people talk about how we do need an all-of-the-above approach, and wind needs to be a part of that. We have the best modular wind in the 48 states, and that provides opportunity for development.

But in Wyoming, we also recognize that you have a coal-fired plant producing X amount of megawatts, to replace that with wind, the footprint is going to be much larger with wind turbines. It brings in issues of viewsheds, it brings in issues of endangered species, like the sage grouse. And so it has to be a balanced approach.

On top of it, you have a transmission issue, which has the same viewshed, endangered species issues.

I think it is appropriate that Wyoming look at wind. But what I want to see on wind, I don't just want to have the wind farms. I want to see if there is an opportunity to develop the expertise to be making the components that make up the wind turbines and towers to maximize economic opportunity. Just putting up wind farms and taking them down, I think we're missing the bulk of what those wind farms can provide.

The footprint of a coal-fired plant and the equivalent footprint of a wind farm of the same size, it is something Wyoming should keep in mind, as some place that values outdoor recreation and views.

Let me ask you about some bills in Congress. One would eliminate the Obama administration's social cost of carbon calculation. Another, from Wyoming's Rep. Liz Cheney (R), would prevent another leasing moratorium. How important are those to the state?

Well, I think starting with the leasing moratorium: That was problematic in a number of ways. Current time and place, what's happening. But for companies that are looking for investment, money and insurance, from people who are saying, "Where should we go do research?" — that is a very bad sign. It sort of looks like there won't be things to research because coal is shutting down.

If you really care about global climate, that would be a bad news story to have a moratorium on coal, because what you're doing is shutting down the place best suited to find innovation. That's the United States, and you're leaving it to China and India and other places to find the solution.

If the environment is your issue, I think it's bad for the environment because you're sending out a big disincentive for people to continue to address the solutions for coal.

What was the other one?

The social cost of carbon.

I've not read that. The balance where I would be in Wyoming is the best way to go on CO2 is find a commercial use for it. Rather than just saying it's a burden and we're going to tax it, the better thing to do is to utilize it.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365163-week-ahead-arctic-drilling-measure-nears-finish-line>

Week ahead: Arctic Drilling measure nears finish line

By Timothy Cama, 12/18/17, 6:00 AM

Congress is expected to vote in the coming week on final passage of Republicans' tax reform bill, which would also open Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and natural gas drilling.

The conference committee responsible for reconciling the House and Senate tax bills -- which includes top ANWR drilling proponents Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) and Rep. [Don Young](#) (R-Alaska), is due to unveil their final bill late Friday, setting up potential votes for next week.

Murkowski and Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) (R-Ky.) have said ANWR drilling would be in the legislation.

Since the bill is being considered under budget reconciliation rules, it only needs 51 votes to pass.

Some House Republicans expressed concern about opening up ANWR, but in recent days have said its inclusion in the tax bill would not be a deal breaker.

The GOP is eager to pass the tax bill before Christmas to secure a major legislative victory for the year.

Under the initial proposal that passed the Senate, the Interior Department would be required to hold at least two auctions for drilling rights leases in ANWR's Coastal Plain area in the next 10 years.

The vote would cap off decades of advocacy by most Alaska leaders, some Alaska Native groups, the oil industry, Republicans and others to open up ANWR for drilling.

Environmentalists have been furiously fighting the proposal at every step, arguing that drilling would be devastating for ANWR's ecology, its imperiled fauna and the climate.

But greens and Democrats have recognized that their time and options for stopping drilling are running out, particularly since the drilling provision is in a budget bill.

The Senate also could act on Trump administration nominees who are pending before the year ends.

The nominees still in the Senate's hopper include Andrew Wheeler to be the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy administrator, Kathleen Hartnett White to be chairwoman of the Council on Environmental Quality, Barry Myers to be the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's administrator and Jim Bridenstine to be the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's administrator.

A Senate panel cleared Myers on Wednesday. Myers was, until recently, the CEO of AccuWeather, Inc., which he co-founded. The company provides weather forecasting information similar to the National Weather Service. Democrats had raised concerns that Myers would be conflicted.

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Bloomberg Environment

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125183576&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Farmworker Protection Rule Rewrite Could Stall Pivotal Funding

By Tiffany Stecker, 12/18/17

The EPA will propose changes to Obama administration rules to protect farmworkers and applicators from pesticides next week, in what is expected to be an arduous task for the agency.

The move could also stall passage of critical legislation to keep one office afloat.

The agency announced Dec. 14 that it would begin revising certain requirements in the Worker Protection Standard, a 2015 rule that updated standards for reducing pesticide exposure to nearly 2 million farmworkers nationwide, and a January 2017 rule to certify the applicators of the most restricted-use pesticides.

Although the implementation dates for the rules won't change, the move invites industry to lobby for changes in regulations that took years to negotiate.

Tough Spot

The announcement also could place the agency in a difficult position.

The Office of Pesticide Programs is eager for Congress to reauthorize the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act, a bill that allows the office to collect industry fees to complete pesticide registrations and other work.

But Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) has placed a hold on the legislation ([H.R. 1029](#)) in the Senate since July, stating that he will lift his hold when the EPA commits to fully implementing the farmworker rules.

“The EPA is saying that they won't revoke these rules while they consider revoking them,” Udall told Bloomberg Environment in an emailed statement. “That isn't comforting, and it doesn't resolve my concerns.”

“I haven't yet heard a reasonable answer to my requests from the EPA. They have told me repeatedly that they don't have the resources to carry out essential functions,” Udall added. “Yet at the same time, they have chosen to undergo an expensive and labor-intensive rewriting of crucial aspects of these worker protection rules.”

Changes ‘Puts Children at Risk’

By the end of fiscal year 2018, the agency will request comments from the public on three aspects of the rule—the minimum age of 18 to apply pesticides, the allowance for a “designated representative” to obtain pesticide use information on a farmworker's behalf, and buffer zones around pesticide-spraying equipment meant to shield farmers from chemicals.

The EPA will solicit comments by the end of FY 2018 to change the minimum age requirement of 18 for the certification and training rule, which covers applicators for the most restricted types of pesticides.

The implementation dates for the Jan. 4, 2017, rule will remain unchanged.

Andrea Delgado, legislative director for the advocacy organization Earthjustice, slammed the announcement as an attempt to weaken important farmworker protections.

“Gutting the basic safeguards provided by these two rules will deny farm workers the right to access pesticide information via a farm worker representative and put children at risk of pesticide misuse, injury, illness, and death,” Delgado said in a statement. “Whether it's in Congress or in the courtroom, we'll defend these crucial protections every step of the way.”

‘It Is Kind of Discouraging’

The top EPA career official for worker safety in the Office of Pesticide Programs expressed frustration last month that the Trump administration was considering re-opening the rules for examination.

“I thought we reached a good position in both regulations, so it is kind of discouraging to have it still second-guessed at this stage,” Kevin Keaney, branch chief of the Certification and Worker Protection Branch, told an EPA advisory committee Nov. 30.

“We're in a new environment,” Keaney added. He was not authorized to comment to Bloomberg Environment on the Dec. 14 announcement.

Earlier this year, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture petitioned the EPA to extend the compliance date for the Worker Protection Standard from Jan. 1, 2017, to at least February 2018. The EPA granted its request, saying it would extend the date “until the necessary guidance and training have been completed.”

Charlotte Bertrand, acting principal deputy assistant administrator for the EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, told NASDA Dec. 13 that the implementation date for the rule would not be delayed beyond Jan. 2, 2018, but that the EPA would reconsider certain aspects of the rule in response to concerns that came out of President Donald Trump's Feb. 24 executive order on regulatory reduction.

The agricultural pesticide trade association CropLife America met with Udall for months to convince him to lift his hold on the legislation.

Although the existing authorization is being extended through the current resolution to fund the federal government that expires Dec. 22, the industry is eager to pass the bill, which would keep the Office of Pesticides Programs afloat for three years. About one-third of the office's work is funded by Pesticide Registration Improvement Act fees.

CropLife America didn't respond to a request for comment.

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E&E News

The man who stormed out of Pruitt's EPA

By Niina Heikkinen, 12/18/17

David Schnare was 26 years old and just out of the U.S. Navy Reserves in 1974 when he had an unforgettable encounter with a dead horse.

Awaiting the start of a master's degree program that fall, Schnare took an internship working with Minnesota's public health department. What he saw shocked him. There were communities with raw sewage running down the streets, and a woman and her children living in a home with cracks in the wooden floorboards wide enough to see the ground beneath, he said.

He recounts one particularly gruesome sight. That woman's husband had put a horse carcass under his neighbor's window because they were having an argument, Schnare said. Rats had started to nest in the dead animal's body.

Schnare thought at the time, "This is what real public health is about."

These days, Schnare is best known for his attacks on mainstream climate science and his litigation against scientists doing the research.

As a former member of U.S. EPA's transition team who stayed at the agency after President Trump's inauguration, Schnare proved to be polarizing for his focus on re-examining the cornerstone of EPA's climate regulations, the endangerment finding for greenhouse gases. He is among a vocal minority of conservatives who see such a review as possible and necessary for undoing regulations on greenhouse gases. He had pushed unsuccessfully for the new EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, to include reconsideration of the endangerment finding as part of the agency's transition plan.

Schnare later left the agency in dramatic fashion, citing conflicts in management styles with Pruitt and later publishing an op-ed criticizing his former boss.

Beyond his most recent work with the Trump administration, Schnare has publicly fought for access to climate scientists' emails in a number of lawsuits. He describes the litigation as an effort to increase transparency, although the targets of his efforts contend that it's an attempt to harass and intimidate them.

Schnare isn't one to call climate change a "hoax," as the president once did. Like Pruitt, he does not reject outright humans' impact on the climate, but he has doubts about how serious that impact will be.

"My examination of climate science suggests that we are not facing a cataclysmic problem. I'm one of those that says, 'Yes, greenhouse gases do have an effect on the climate. The newest and best data we have show that it's a much smaller effect than we thought a decade ago, by a factor

of four," he said.

In other words, it's not as pressing a problem as a rotting horse with rats nesting in its carcass.

'In the weeds' of climate science

Schnare, 69, is easy to pick out of a crowd. He stands over 6 feet tall and sports a silvery-white goatee.

He's given to writing short, sometimes abrupt emails, but in person Schnare is a storyteller, offering anecdotes from conversations decades earlier. He diverts onto seemingly unrelated tangents that ultimately illustrate his thinking on a given issue. He speaks in a soft, measured voice, periodically punctuating important points with sharp raps on the table in front of him.

Schnare first became interested in climate science about a decade ago, when he was a staffer at EPA, he said during a recent interview with E&E News. He recalled conversations with two of his colleagues at the agency, John Davidson and Alan Carlin.

"I respected John's intellect enormously, and Alan Carlin, as well. They are just very bright people. So I decided to take a hard look," he said. "My approach has always been you have to get in the weeds, you have to go look at the data."

Carlin's name has been floated by the conservative Heartland Institute as a potential member of a team to critique climate science — an idea Pruitt is advocating. Both Carlin and Davidson co-authored a report in 2009 that was critical of EPA's use of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change data to develop the agency's endangerment finding. Al McGartland, then the director of EPA's economics office, declined to forward the report to the office managing the development of the finding (*Greenwire*, June 26, 2009).

Republicans at the time and recently have called the episode an example of the Obama EPA suppressing science. Pruitt recently echoed Carlin's and Davidson's critiques in testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee (*Climatewire*, Dec. 8).

Carlin and Davidson weren't the only ones casting doubt on the science behind the endangerment finding. According to emails obtained by E&E News, Schnare also urged EPA staff working on the endangerment finding to consider two different studies that took a divergent view on climate science. In an email exchange with Steve Newbold, an economist at the agency, Schnare said the research cast "significant doubt" on whether man-made greenhouse gases significantly contributed to temperature changes in recent decades.

In the years after EPA published the endangerment finding, Schnare became increasingly interested in speaking out publicly about his views on climate change, a topic that was not a part of his work at the agency.

One of Schnare's main arguments against mainstream climate science is what he describes as an overreliance on climate modeling over empirical temperature data. He questions the way

researchers track temperature changes and often points to the benefits of carbon dioxide to plant life and the perils to the planet if atmospheric CO2 fell too low. Climate scientists repeatedly note that other effects of climate change may outweigh the benefits that a CO2 uptick might offer vegetation (*Climatewire*, Oct. 17).

His targets complain of harassment

Inspired by the "Climategate" scandal, in which hacked climate scientists' emails fed fringe theories of a climate conspiracy, Schnare began sending out Freedom of Information Act requests for the emails of a number of government and university climate scientists. If the scientists were too slow to respond or refused his request, Schnare took them to court to get the emails. Schnare describes these lawsuits as part of an effort to publicly reveal the data and people guiding policymaking decisions on climate change.

Those who have been on the receiving end of his lawsuits see matters quite differently. A number of people who spoke to E&E News described Schnare's legal actions as an attempt to harass and silence climate scientists.

Some questioned whether Schnare was following EPA's ethics guidelines when he started pursuing the emails of climate scientist Michael Mann from Mann's time at the University of Virginia. Schnare brought the case while working with a group he helped found, the American Tradition Institute. ATI is the precursor to Schnare's later group, the Energy and Environment Legal Institute, where until recently Schnare served as general counsel. In an Oct. 24, 2011, affidavit, Schnare states he had permission to do pro bono work with ATI before he retired from EPA on Sept. 30, 2011.

Others have critiqued the strength of Schnare's legal arguments and the intent behind his lawsuits.

In one case, Schnare was part of a lawsuit that sought to stop EPA researchers at the University of North Carolina from conducting human trials of air pollutions' impacts. The study tested the temporary impact of inhaling low concentrations of ozone or particulate matter. Schnare had tried unsuccessfully to argue that he had standing as a concerned citizen to bring the case himself, as well as to act as a lawyer. He even referenced the starvation death of his great-uncle and namesake, David Steiner, in a Nazi concentration camp, and the horrors of the human testing done there. This was meant to establish why he could bring the lawsuit, according to Steve Milloy, who worked on the case with Schnare.

Steve Silverman, an attorney for EPA at the time, said EPA's controlled human-exposure studies followed strict ethical and scientific guidelines. He noted subjects were exposed to pollution levels "equivalent to that experienced in domestic urban areas." Silverman slammed the reasoning behind the lawsuit.

"I've never seen anything like it, both the level of malice and baseless legal theories. The District Judge hearing the case dismissed it out of hand," Silverman said in an email.

Gavin Schmidt, a NASA scientist whom Schnare sued to obtain his private emails in a separate lawsuit, derided the suggestion that obtaining those emails would lead to greater transparency in policymaking. In this case, which extended over five years, Schnare was part of a legal team that sought NASA emails on surface temperature records, as well as Schmidt's nonofficial emails.

"The idea that they need to see my personal emails in order to improve transparency in policymaking is transparently bullshit," Schmidt said. "My personal emails, how is that involved in policymaking? I don't work for a policy agency, I've never made policy in my life. And so why are they targeting me? It's just because I'm a scientist in the public eye."

Schmidt noted that now that he has had some distance from the case, he doesn't see the lawsuit as a personal attack, but he and others Schnare had sued became representative of the larger scientific community.

"It is very, very transparent that it's supposed to be a chilling effect on scientists speaking out in public," he said.

3 decades at EPA

A longtime Northern Virginia resident, Schnare grew up in the suburbs outside Chicago. His father worked as an accountant for General Electric, and his mother stayed at home to care for Schnare, his twin sister and two brothers. He left Illinois for Mount Vernon, Iowa, where he got an undergraduate degree from Cornell College in 1970.

Schnare had been accepted into a chemistry Ph.D. program at the State University of New York at Buffalo when he got a call from a Navy recruiter. With the Vietnam draft looming (he remembers his draft number: 29), Schnare joined the Navy Reserve and sailed around the Mediterranean instead.

Schnare credits his time in the Navy in part for pushing him into the government.

"You're making a commitment to the American people that goes beyond yourself. And you are around people who have, as well. So there's an ethic there that you get into," he said.

Afterward, Schnare obtained a master's degree in public health and a Ph.D. in environmental management from UNC. Doctorate in hand, Schnare quickly landed a job working on policy in the office of drinking water at EPA, where he launched what would be a 33-year career at the agency that included work in regulatory analysis and enforcement. After about 14 years at EPA, Schnare began taking evening classes at George Mason University's law school and obtained a law degree while still working full time.

Those close to Schnare are quick to mention his intellect, wry sense of humor and love of dogs. For many years, Schnare and his wife, Marlae, bred and showed Labrador retrievers.

Wade Miller, a consultant on water issues who has known Schnare professionally and personally for more than 40 years, equated Schnare's commitment to the environment to that of Bill Reilly,

Russell Train and Lee Thomas, former EPA administrators under Presidents George H.W. Bush, Nixon and Reagan, respectively.

"He is one of the most honest, ethical people I've ever met, and he is more dedicated to the protection of public health and protection of the environment than almost anyone I've ever met," said Miller.

'Licking his wounds'

Last year, Myron Ebell, the head of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's EPA transition, offered Schnare a position on the team. Schnare would later go on to join the "beachhead" team — the first wave of Trump political staffers at EPA — after he said he was assured a position at the agency.

But that never materialized. While Schnare brought decades of experience working at EPA, he said he wasn't able to work effectively with Pruitt (*Climatewire*, Dec. 8).

The abrupt exit from the agency was not a first for Schnare. In the mid-1990s, Schnare described leaving EPA for a period of time on detail to another federal office after he had conflicts with then-office director Mike Cook. Now, Schnare counts Cook as a personal friend. And Schnare cited conflicts over the proper degree of enforcement actions as one of the reasons he finally left the agency in 2011.

"I don't believe it's appropriate to bang your head against the wall and make a lot of noise and be an aggravation. I believe in team play, and I believe in supporting the people in charge, and if you can't do that, then you don't belong there," he said.

Miller, the consultant who has known Schnare since his days in the office of drinking water, advised his longtime friend to remain at the agency this time, despite conflicts with Pruitt. He noted that Schnare would have been a "tremendously valuable resource" at EPA had he stayed.

"He's still licking his wounds from his parting from EPA; I think he's trying to figure out what to do next," Miller said.

Schnare says he's focusing his attention forward. He sees part of his time in retirement going to some pro bono work, and he is also looking to return to water issues. He is particularly concerned about the blue green algae that is de-oxygenating the Chesapeake Bay.

Outside of work, Schnare plans to get his hands dirty. A potter in his spare time with a pottery wheel and kiln at home, Schnare says he is going to go into crystalline pottery this winter.

"This is what true retirement is, when you quit your job, the kids leave home, the dog dies, and then you can do anything you want and you don't have to worry about it. We are fast approaching that," he said.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060069237/search?keyword=EPA>

Congress faces another shutdown deadline this week

By George Cahlink, 12/18/17

Congress this week will have to pass another temporary spending measure to keep federal agencies from shutting down late Friday evening.

The House Rules Committee will meet at 3 p.m. tomorrow to send the latest stopgap, known as a continuing resolution, to the floor.

Capitol Hill is eyeing a CR that would extend funding through Jan. 19, buying lawmakers time to negotiate an elusive final fiscal 2018 compromise.

A major sticking point is that the parties and the House and Senate have different approaches for those negotiations.

The House is expected to move legislation that would increase funding for the Pentagon for all of fiscal 2018 but provide level spending for all other agencies through mid-January. It would also extend the politically popular Children's Health Insurance Program.

That strategy is designed to appease conservatives who say they would be reluctant to support another CR that does not increase military dollars.

They are eager to separate Defense Department funding from the rest of government to avoid having to provide a similar boost for domestic coffers.

Under the House plan, U.S. EPA and the Interior and Energy departments would be largely level-funded until mid-January.

The Senate, however, is certain to reject the House approach. Already, Senate Democrats there have said they have the votes to filibuster any spending bill that does not provide parity between defense and non-defense accounts.

Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), a senior appropriator, said the Senate is eyeing returning a CR to the House that would sidestep the defense increase and keep spending steady into the next year. He added he supports a Pentagon hike but wants some domestic increases too.

Shelby conceded there is not enough time to negotiate a broad deal on spending before Christmas, especially with Republicans in both chambers moving to pass tax reform legislation

also this week (*see related story*).

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), chairman of the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, said he's frustrated that some House members believe they can "jam" the Senate by adjourning for the year after they move a CR with a defense hike.

"If you are going to do that, you better have a return flight because I don't think the Senate is going to take it up just because we have gone home," he said.

Simpson also expressed frustration that now, almost halfway into fiscal 2018, which began Oct. 1, agencies are being funded at last year's levels. He said a series of CRs are an "irresponsible way" to run government.

"It means you are addressing the issues that existed in last year's budget, not this year's budget. In other words, you are addressing the priorities of the previous administration and not this administration because our appropriations bills [for fiscal 2018] changed a lot of the focus," Simpson added.

Despite the mounting frustration over incomplete spending, it's widely expected Congress will find a way around a shutdown by passing a CR that treats all agencies equally. The expectation is it will not move until later in the week, after lawmakers move their tax overhaul.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told "Fox News Sunday" about the possibility of a shutdown: "I can't rule it out, but I can't imagine it occurring."

Disaster funding

Lawmakers are also wrestling with how to provide aid for victims of recent hurricanes and wildfires before leaving for the holidays.

Rep. Dennis Ross (R-Fla.) said lawmakers from Texas and Florida, the states hit hardest by recent storms, have talked about opposing any CR without a commitment to the relief this year.

He said the emergency supplemental spending could be attached to the CR or move as stand-alone legislation this week.

Congressional leaders for now have not said how disaster aid will move, although both chambers favor a package that would be above the \$44 billion in relief sought by the White House last month.

"This is not going to be the last supplemental," said Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee.

Calvert declined to offer a dollar figure for a supplemental, but he suggested it would be a down payment on aid to avoid shortfalls until final spending is worked out in the larger omnibus next year.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/a-zero-tolerance-policy-for-trumps-zero-experience-nominees/article/2643681>

OPINION: A zero-tolerance policy for Trump's zero-experience nominees

By Washington Examiner, 12/17/17, 12:01 AM

One week after President Trump won the election, some Washington residents protested against him on the Capitol grounds. One sign, illustrated with an outline of the District of Columbia, read, “Don’t Drain my Swamp.”

The federal capital's incestuous network of revolving-door cronies and entrenched bureaucrats have so protected and increased their own power in recent years that the five wealthiest counties in America are all within commuting distance of Capitol Hill.

These swamp creatures complain that Trump is bringing in too many outsiders. Beltway insiders consider it a crime that the president has nominated critics of agencies to head those very agencies — see Scott Pruitt at the Environmental Protection Agency and Scott Garrett at the Export-Import Bank — when in truth, it's praiseworthy. Trump should wear those criticisms as a badge of honor.

But he seems in some areas to have confused the value of bringing in outsiders with a disregard for expertise. On more than one occasion, the president has hired or nominated people clearly unqualified for the job.

We’re not talking only about Trump’s “Apprentice” co-star Omarosa Manigault Newman, who was run out of the White House last week, but she is a fine example. She has a Ph.D., and is ordained as a minister, but how she was qualified for a top job in the Office of Public Liaison was never explained. She seemed to lack the relevant networks, personality traits, and experience to do the job well. She was blasted as having “absolutely no standing in the Black community, nor any institutional knowledge of Black Republicans or the Republican Party.”

Personal loyalty and name recognition are no substitute.

Of more consequence have been Trump’s nominees to lifetime appointments requiring Senate confirmation. Matthew Spencer Petersen, Trump’s nominee to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, put on an embarrassing performance last week before the Senate Judiciary Committee. He admitted under Republican questioning to having no courtroom experience — as in, none — and to a glaring ignorance of common principles of legal doctrine.

This sort of nomination is damaging, first and most simply because the country needs qualified judges and administrators.

Second, filling a district court slot with a subpar conservative shrinks the high-caliber conservative bench for higher court openings in the future.

Third, it gives ammunition to the Left. Liberals assert speciously that any judge disapproved of by the left-leaning American Bar Association shouldn't be confirmed. They even tried to say this year that devout Catholicism disqualifies a nominee. Putting up unqualified nominees makes it easier for the Left to confuse the friendly mainstream media that a *good* nominee is similarly not up to snuff.

Ideology or personal loyalty aren't enough. The Trump administration needs to demand relevant experience and knowledge before hiring or nominating anyone. Until the administration starts maintaining such standards, it will be up to Republicans in the Senate to enforce them.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/green-groups-threaten-lawsuits-to-fight-epa-reorganization/article/2643698>

Green groups threaten lawsuits to fight EPA reorganization

By John Siciliano, 12/16/17, 12:01 AM

Environmental groups are looking at a new wave of lawsuits and pressure campaigns to counter Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt's plans to reorganize the agency and get businesses to not cooperate with him.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is looking at options to sue Pruitt over his enforcement policy after last week's reporting by the New York Times that showed the Trump administration is penalizing polluters at a much lower level than previous Republican and Democratic administrations.

The EPA said the Times "distorted" the facts. "The reality is that Environmental groups are looking at a new wave of lawsuits and pressure campaigns to counter Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt's plans to reorganize the agency and get businesses to not cooperate with him.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is looking at options to sue Pruitt over his enforcement policy after last week's reporting by the New York Times that showed the Trump administration is penalizing polluters at a much lower level than previous Republican and Democratic administrations.

The EPA said the Times "distorted" the facts. "The reality is that Administrator Scott Pruitt is committed to enforcement [and] has repeatedly underscored the need to continue to vigorously enforce against polluters."

The NRDC cites a memorandum that lays out Pruitt's enforcement strategy, which the group said could form the basis of a major new lawsuit charging that his new direction for the agency violates the Clean Air Act.

"An agency like EPA may not issue guidance that relieves regulated industries of legal obligations, unless the agency first undertakes notice-and-comment rulemaking that provides the public fair opportunities to comment and oppose unlawful or harmful actions. The Trump EPA did not do this," according to John Walke, NRDC's director for clean air policy, in a recent post.

While NRDC mulls its options, "nothing in the administrator's action stops states, public health and environmental groups, and ordinary citizens from bringing enforcement lawsuits to uphold clean air protections that the Trump administration proclaims it will not," Walke wrote.

The group also plans to submit a Freedom of Information Act request soon to obtain all records related to the development of Pruitt's enforcement policy contained in a memo issued earlier this month after the EPA chief appeared before the House energy committee for the first time as administrator.

"Congress and EPA's Office of Inspector General also should investigate these deeply troubling actions," according to Walke.

Other environmental groups are going after large companies that have been offered a chance to collaborate with Pruitt, because they believe it is cover for "destroying the agency's ability to do its job," according to the Environmental Working Group.

Environmental Working Group President Ken Cook sent an aggressively worded letter to James Lentz, the CEO of Toyota North America, to reject any partnership with Pruitt or risk betraying the company's commitment to good environmental stewardship.

Pruitt had told the Energy and Commerce Committee that he was asking Toyota to partner with him on improving management effectiveness at the agency.

"Nothing in Mr. Pruitt's actions or public statements to date as head of the EPA, or in his prior role as Oklahoma's attorney general, suggests that he comes to issues of EPA's performance, management and effectiveness with an impartial interest in improving the agency through any management techniques," Cook wrote. "To the contrary, Mr. Pruitt already has an overarching objective for the EPA: to destroy its ability to achieve its mission."

The group urged Lentz to "immediately and unambiguously announce Toyota's rejection of any partnership with EPA" or Pruitt, according to the letter. "To do otherwise risks irreparable harm to Toyota's brand and reputation in the American marketplace."

Townhall

<https://townhall.com/tipsheet/cortneyobrien/2017/12/16/heres-how-many-people-have-left-the-epa-since-scott-pruitt-took-over-n2423067>

Here's How Many People Have Left the EPA Since Scott Pruitt Took Over

By Cortney O'Brien, 12/16/17, 12:00 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency has shrunk considerably since Scott Pruitt took over as administrator. In fact, the agency is back to President Reagan-era staff levels.

Over 700 EPA personnel have either retired, quit, or taken voluntary buyouts since Pruitt took over, Think Progress found after combing through federal employment statistics. Some are quitting in "disgust."

"There has been a drop of employees of 770 between April and December. While several hundred of those are buyouts, the rest of those are either people that are retiring or quitting in disgust," Kyla Bennett, director of New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), told ThinkProgress. "Is that number higher than it would normally be? I think it is."

Liberals were outraged over Pruitt's nomination last year, labeling him a "climate skeptic" and criticizing his ties to the fossil fuel industry.

"Having Scott Pruitt in charge of the US Environmental Protection Agency is like putting an arsonist in charge of fighting fires," Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club, said of the nomination.

Famous environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio brought his concerns straight to President-elect Trump at Trump Tower, where he and activist Terry Tamminen reportedly prepared a presentation explaining how preserving the environment has a positive effect on the economy.

Pruitt has been credited with influencing Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Agreement. He has also targeted the Obama-era Clean Power Plan and Clean Water Rule. *Rolling Stone Magazine* accused Pruitt of "quietly tearing down decades of environmental progress."

CNN

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/16/opinions/epa-cuts-make-public-health-emergency-krupp-opinion/index.html>

OPINION: EPA cuts could risk a public health emergency

By Fred Krupp: 12/16/17, 8:46 PM

With time running out for Congress to reach an agreement on the budget, lawmakers are advancing a quiet but crippling assault on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which has already suffered years of hollowing out from budget cuts. At stake is the EPA's fundamental ability to carry out its most basic public health and environmental missions. Without full funding for the agency, the health of our children, our seniors and our communities are at risk.

President Donald Trump, who pledged as a candidate to reduce EPA down to "little tidbits," asked for around 30% cuts to the agency this spring — deeper than any other agency and enough to cut its funding to 1970s levels in real dollars. The potential real-world result will be more asthma attacks, more heart attacks, and more pollution in our lives. And if all that isn't enough, the administration also wants to cut support for critically needed research into alternative energy sources and innovations to protect the water we drink from physical, chemical, and biological threats.

Congress, which has traditionally provided bipartisan support for environmental safeguards that protect constituents, is falling out of step with public support for a fully capable EPA. In September, the House of Representatives voted to cut the EPA budget by \$528 million in 2018, less radical than Trump's proposal but deeply damaging. And just days before Thanksgiving, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee hustled through cuts of his own, choosing to "release" the chairman's recommendation, without so much as a public hearing.

This kind of secrecy is not surprising when you consider what is being proposed. Remarkably, the Senate proposal would eliminate EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) program, which provides foundational assessments of chemical toxicity needed to protect American families. And it would cut "green chemistry" research designed to produce safer chemicals while improving the safety of production and disposal of chemicals.

Congress is also proposing major cuts to EPA's enforcement budget, making it harder to hold polluters accountable when they use hazardous pesticides inside nursing homes, release dangerous chemicals into the air, dump oil and hazardous waste into the ocean and sludge into storm drains. The EPA already has about 50 fewer criminal investigators than the 200 required by law. Further cuts would send the wrong message to polluters who flout the law—and be a slap in the face to the majority of businesses who work hard to deal properly with hazardous

materials.

Read More

Also on the chopping block are critical clean-air programs, like pollution monitoring, that have helped states and communities make historic strides in fighting air pollution. Congress would also cut support for monitoring of greenhouse gases, harmful particulates, and other pollutants.

The White House, House and Senate budget cuts all would require EPA to continue to lay off public health experts, environmental engineers, scientists, and other vital staff members. They would also slash the agency's science and technology work, which helps states and localities fight and clean up pollution. They would even cut support for environmental justice efforts that help the country's most disadvantaged communities whose children are at a disproportionate risk of health problems like asthma, lead poisoning, and other serious ailments.

As William Ruckelshaus, EPA's administrator under Presidents Nixon and Reagan, put it, in response to Scott Pruitt's secrecy in managing the agency under Trump, "It appears that what is happening now is taking a meat ax to the protections of public health and environment and then hiding it."

In addition to worrying about our children's health, members of Congress ought to consider the effects of rolling back environmental safeguards on their political health as the voting electorate grows younger and greener. More than 85% of Americans call the environment a top or important priority, according to Pew Research Center, and over 60% want the EPA preserved or strengthened. And as former GOP Governor Thomas Kean pointed out recently, as of August, fewer than 1 in 4 independents approve of President Trump's handling of environmental issues.

Whether lawmakers strike a deal now, or delay decisions until early in the new year, it's time to pick a side. The frightening truth is this: If the EPA is forced to continue cutting corners, the chances of a horrifying environmental disaster will only grow. Every child, from Alaska to Maine to Tennessee, and everywhere in between, deserves to grow up with clean water, food and air.

Inside EPA

<https://insideepa.com/daily-feed/ewire-pruitts-red-team-climate-debate-hold>

Pruitt's 'red team' climate debate on hold

Inside EPA, 12/18/17

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for months has touted his plan to publicly debate mainstream climate change science using a “red team, blue team” format, but one news report says the idea is “on hold” due to splits within the Trump administration on several issues.

One source tells *E&E News* that following a meeting last week with White House officials and EPA air chief Bill Wehrum, the “red team” project is paused. Even before the meeting, an official said there are “many issues to be ironed out.”

Pruitt recently testified to House members that the public debates could begin “early next year” and as soon as January.

Hard-line conservative groups opposed to greenhouse gas regulation hope that Pruitt's “red team” effort will highlight sufficient uncertainty in mainstream scientific findings about anthropogenic climate change that it could allow EPA to reverse the Obama administration's GHG endangerment finding, which forms the foundation for EPA's climate rules.

During the hearing, the administrator criticized the prior administration's process for crafting the GHG risk finding, charging it was “accelerated” and wrongly used work by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

However, he stopped short of agreeing with one lawmaker's call to reconsider the finding, and he has several times previously hedged on the issue.

Regarding the “red team” idea, *E&E* quotes one source close to the administration as saying it is possible that Pruitt and the White House “have differences of opinion over how it should be launched and what part of the government should be in charge of it.”

Some groups have pushed for the effort not to be led by EPA, but rather the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, which would allow it to convene an inter-agency group to

look at the issue.

Tricia Lynn

Office of Public Affairs

U.S. EPA

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To: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]
Cc: Milbourn, Cathy[Milbourn.Cathy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 2:40:32 PM
Subject: RE: 15 Min Warning: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

One edit, otherwise looks good.

Change the WT story to ...

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no 'environmental savior.'

From: Konkus, John
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 10:14 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Freire, JP <Freire.JP@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>
Cc: Milbourn, Cathy <Milbourn.Cathy@epa.gov>
Subject: 15 Min Warning: EPA's Weekly Round-Up
Importance: High

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

May 12, 2017

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund sites, it was a successful week at EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009."

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no 'environmental savior.' *"Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration's attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama's tenure."*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *"Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. 'What's so great about that record,' he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. 'I don't quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.'"*

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *"Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because 'they exceeded their statutory authority.' 'They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.'"*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *"Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA's failure to fix Flint's water system."*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors. *"The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took*

place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I'm sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it's the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board."

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama's administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. "Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on "cooperative federalism" and working with the states."

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. "[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues."

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. "Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota's ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery."

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. "'If you go back to the inception of the agency...Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,' EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. 'The past administration simply disregarded that,' he continued."

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. "Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state's relationship with that federal agency. 'The days of coercive federalism are over,' new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum."

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. "Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president's new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota."

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule."

Oklahoma City's KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. "The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... 'Improving the Nation's water is one of EPA's highest priorities under the Trump administration,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma's attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump's administration."

R083

If you would rather not receive future communications from Environmental Protection Agency, let us know by clicking [here](#).
Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460 United States

To: Jackie Toth[jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:15:36 PM
Subject: RE: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Jackie Toth [mailto:jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:59 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

Hi all,

Can the EPA please comment on the inquiry from Whitehouse and Harris today with concerns over conflicts of interest in the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs? Can the agency be specific on what services the firm is providing for the agency? Will the EPA be responding by Thursday as requested?

Deadline is no later than 3:15pm today.

Thanks all,

Jackie

Jackie Toth

CQ Legal

Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst

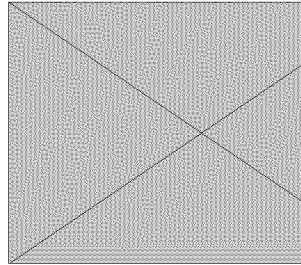
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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Cliff Sims
Sent: Wed 6/28/2017 3:41:37 PM
Subject: MORNING COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING - June 28, 2017



MORNING COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING

June 28, 2017

NEWS OF THE DAY

Immigration Fact Sheet

"We are protecting the freedoms of law-abiding Americans, and we are going after the criminal gangs and cartels that prey on our innocent citizens." – President Donald J. Trump

TAKING ACTION TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: For too long, politicians across the country have failed to enforce the immigration laws already on the books.

- Just months in office, President Donald J. Trump is keeping his promises to the American people and taking action to enforce our country's immigration laws.
 - President Trump's policies have already had an impact, with 64 percent fewer apprehensions and inadmissible entries at the southwest border compared to the same time last year.
- In the first 100 days after President Trump signed Executive Orders on immigration enforcement, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has seen nearly 40 percent more Enforcement and Removal Operations compared to the same time last year.
 - Nearly 75 percent of these illegal immigrants have been convicted criminals with offenses ranging from homicide and assault to sexual abuse and drug-related charges.
 - Arrests of convicted criminal aliens climbed by nearly 20 percent this year compared to the same time last year.
- In fiscal year 2017, ICE has removed 2,798 gang members, compared to 2,057 gang members in all of fiscal year 2016.
 - ICE has specifically targeted MS-13 gang members for removal on immigration violations.
- President Trump has acted to strengthen the country's ability to enforce the laws and stop illegal immigration at the border:
 - Directed the hiring of 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents and 10,000 ICE agents.
 - Ordered the construction of a wall on the southern border and prioritized funds in his budget to begin its construction.

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO ENFORCE OUR LAWS: President Trump is supporting legislation

in Congress that begin to address sanctuary cities and immigrants that repeatedly enter the country illegally.

- President Trump supports the passage of the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act (H.R. 3003).
 - According to a recent Harvard-Harris poll, 80 percent of Americans support ending the practice of sanctuary cities that refuse to turn over criminal illegal immigrants to Federal authorities.
 - Under the bill, states and localities that refuse to follow Federal law and cooperate with Federal law enforcement will no longer receive certain grants from the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS).
 - Instead, states and localities that do cooperate will see grants shifted towards them.
 - The Secretary of Homeland Security can refuse to transfer illegal immigrants in DHS custody to authorities that refuse to cooperate with Federal immigration authorities.
- President Trump supports the passage of Kate's Law (H.R. 3004).
 - The law is named after 32-year-old Kate Steinle, who was gunned down in broad daylight by a 5-time deported criminal illegal immigrant with seven prior felony convictions.
 - The law would increase the mandatory penalties for illegal immigrants who re-enter the United States to up to two years in Federal prison.
 - Illegal immigrants who re-enter the United States are eligible to up to 25 years of Federal prison.
 - In his efforts to help the victims of these crimes, the President ordered the creation of the Department of Homeland Security's Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) office so the victims of illegal immigration would no longer be ignored.

A PROMISE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: While running for President, Donald Trump promised the American people he would bring back law and order to our broken immigration system.

- On August 31, 2016, Donald Trump said:
 - "We will end the sanctuary cities that have resulted in so many needless deaths. Cities that refuse to cooperate with federal authorities will not receive taxpayer dollars, and we will work with Congress to pass legislation to protect those jurisdictions that do assist federal authorities."
 - "Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws."
 - "Now is the time for all of us, as one country, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative, to band together to deliver justice and safety and security for all Americans."

No Sanctuary for Criminals Act (H.R. 3003)

Top Line:

- Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because politicians failed in their duty to enforce our immigration laws.
- During the campaign, the President vowed to end sanctuary cities that have resulted in so many needless deaths, and this bill is a major part of delivering on his promise.
- Eighty percent of Americans support this legislation – it unites us all, both Democrats and Republicans – and the President is looking forward to signing it into law.

Background:

- Sanctuary Cities are jurisdictions that refuse to turn over criminal aliens to federal authorities.
- This bill would prevent states and localities that refuse to follow federal law and cooperate with federal immigration authorities from receiving certain Department of Justice or Department of Homeland Security grants.
- It would shift those grant funds to states and localities that comply with federal law.
- It would also give the Secretary of Homeland Security the discretion to refuse to transfer aliens in DHS custody to states and localities that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

Kate's Law (H.R. 3004)

Top Line:

- Kate's Law is named for 32-year-old Kate Steinle, who was gunned down in broad daylight two years ago this Saturday by a 5-time deported criminal illegal alien with seven prior felony convictions.
- The Federal Government's first duty is to protect our citizens.
 - ☐ Sadly, Kate's story is far too common.
 - ☐ We must strengthen the penalties for aliens illegally re-entering our country, and this bill will do exactly that.
- This bill will further empower our great law enforcement agencies to keep violent gangs and criminal cartels, like MS-13, out of our communities.

Background:

- This bill would increase the mandatory penalties for aliens who illegally re-enter the United States, with stronger penalty increases for aliens who have been previously convicted of crimes.
 - ☐ Aliens who re-enter the United States after being deported can be imprisoned for up to two years in federal prison.
 - ☐ Previously-deported aliens with criminal records who re-enter the United States are eligible to serve federal prison sentences up to 25 years, depending on the nature of the prior conviction or convictions.

Trafficking in Persons Report

Top Line:

- Ending human trafficking is a major priority for the Trump Administration.
 - ☐ Human trafficking is one of the most tragic human rights issues of our time. It splinters families, distorts global markets, undermines the rule of law, and spurs other transnational criminal activity.
 - ☐ It threatens public safety and national security. But worst of all, the crime robs human beings of their freedom and their dignity. That's why we must pursue an end to the scourge of human trafficking.
- The White House has hosted roundtables and listening sessions with victims, NGO's, Members of Congress, and others to determine steps we can take to better execute a strategy to end human trafficking.

- The President signed an Executive Order designed to strengthen the enforcement of federal law with regard to transnational criminal organizations, including traffickers.
- He has also taken steps to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security personnel are properly trained to combat child trafficking at points of entry in to the United States.

Highlights from Ivanka Trump's Remarks at the State Department

- "Human trafficking is a pervasive human rights issue, affecting millions no matter their gender, age, or nationality. It is often a profoundly secret crime. One of the greatest challenges is merely to identify those trapped in modern slavery."
- "Even conservative estimates conclude that some 20 million people around the world – including right here in the United States – are trapped in Human Trafficking situations – terrible circumstances of exploitation, including so many young girls and boys who are the victims of the unthinkable tragedy of child sex trafficking."
- "Last month while in Rome, I had an opportunity to talk with human trafficking survivors. They told me of their harrowing stories. How they were trapped in this ugly, dark web. How they survived. how they escaped. And how they are slowly rebuilding their lives."
- "The survivors are not only victims, they are heroes. So are those courageous crusaders who have committed themselves to fight human trafficking wherever it exists."
- "As we mark the release of this year's report, let us remember the victims saved from the unimaginable horrors of human trafficking. Let us recommit ourselves to finding those still in the shadows of exploitation, and let us celebrate the heroes who continue to shine a light on the darkness of human trafficking."

Background:

- [Read the full report](#)
- The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is the U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.
- It is also the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government's commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.
- In the TIP Report, the Department of State places each country onto one of three tiers based on the extent of their governments' efforts to comply with the "[minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking](#)."

POTUS SCHEDULE

- Tribal, State and Local Energy Roundtable
- Meet and Greet with World Series Champion Chicago Cubs
- Meeting with Immigration Crime Victims
- Remarks at Republican National Committee Dinner

ADDITIONAL NEWS OF THE DAY

Energy Week

Top Line

- With his America First energy policies, the President is ushering in a new era of American energy dominance.
- Producing more American energy is a central part of the President's plan to Making America Wealthy Again – especially for the poorest Americans.
- America is sitting on a treasure trove of untapped energy, and it's all upside: more jobs, more revenues, more wealth, higher wages, and lower energy prices.
- Remember, every energy dollar that isn't harvested here in America is harvested instead in a foreign country – often foreign countries not very friendly to us.
 - This not only means we are sending our jobs to those countries, it also means energy is being produced in foreign countries that lack our high environmental and conservation standards.
- The President is committed to eliminating all unnecessary regulations and pursuing the safe and responsible production of America's vast energy resources.

Energy Fact Sheet

PRESIDENT TRUMP UNLEASHES AMERICA'S ENERGY POTENTIAL

"Together, we are going to start a new energy revolution -- one that celebrates American production on American soil." – President Donald J. Trump

ACHIEVING AMERICAN ENERGY DOMINANCE: President Donald J. Trump has taken action in his first five months to remove unnecessary and burdensome roadblocks that would have prevented the United States from achieving energy dominance.

- President Trump withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord.
 - According to National Economic Research Associates (NERA), by 2040 the Paris Climate Accord would have cost the economy nearly \$3 trillion and as many as 6.5 million fewer industrial sector jobs, including 3.1 million fewer manufacturing jobs.
- President Trump directed the Environmental Protection Agency to rescind the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan.
 - According to NERA, it would have increased electricity rates by as much as 14 percent, costing American households \$79 billion.
- President Trump called for the Keystone XL Pipeline to resubmit its application to be built and fast tracked its approval.
 - Construction of the Keystone pipeline is expected to support 42,100 jobs and contribute \$3.4 billion to the American economy.
- President Trump ended the Obama Administration's coal leasing moratorium on Federal land.
 - Federal land accounts for 40 percent of the nation's coal production, including a third of all reserves.
 - According to the American Action Forum, the moratorium could have cost the country billions of dollars and killed coal industry jobs.
- President Trump rescinded the Obama Administration's Stream Protection Rule.
 - The Stream Protection rule would have imposed \$1.2 billion regulatory costs and added 218,000 hours of paperwork on American businesses.
 - The National Mining Association estimated the rule would cost 280,000 jobs in mining and related fields.

- President Trump rescinded the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management's Hydraulic Fracturing Rule.
 - The Hydraulic Fracturing Rule was expected to cost the industry \$32 million a year, adding \$11,400 to the average cost of a hydraulic fracturing well.

CRITICAL TO AN AMERICAN ECONOMIC BOOM: The United States energy industry is critical to the economy and future growth.

- The energy sector has become a leading driver in hiring American workers, currently employing 6.4 million Americans.
 - Last year, the energy sector added over 300,000 new jobs and is expected to add 198,000 new jobs this year.
 - The average annual wage of workers in the oil and gas extraction industry is over \$90,000.
 - Approximately 32 percent of the 6.5 construction industry employees work on energy or energy efficiency projects.
- After being a net energy importer since 1953, it is projected that the United States will be a net energy exporter as soon as 2020.
- The natural gas revolution in the United States is allowing the country to be a global player in exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG).
 - According to the American Action Forum, natural gas exports from 2016 to 2040 could bring in \$1.6 trillion, increase workers earnings by \$110 billion, and raise \$118 billion in Federal revenue.

ENERGY POTENTIAL: While Americans have been told we'd have to settle for declining energy resources, innovation and new technology has opened trillions of dollars worth of energy for development.

- For too long, the country's energy policy has operated as if the country was running out of energy and resources.
 - From 2010 to 2015, crude oil production dropped by nearly 15 percent on Federal land and natural gas production dropped by nearly 13 percent.
 - In 2011, Former President Obama claim "we can't just drill our way out of the problem."
 - In 2006, Former Vice President Al Gore claimed we are "at or near what they call peak oil."
- In reality, American innovation and technology has allowed the United States to access an increasing amount of resources.
 - Current estimates suggest we have 20 percent more oil than Saudi Arabia, valued at over \$13 trillion, if prices average \$50 a barrel.
 - The United States is on track to export an average 1 million barrels of oil a day this year, double the pace of last year.
 - Natural gas reserves are expected to be so large it can meet domestic demand for almost a century.
 - The United States has the second largest coal reserves in the world.

PROMISE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: President Trump is following through on his promises to the American people.

- On March 28, 2017, President Donald Trump:

- ☐ “We will unlock job-producing natural gas, oil, and shale energy. We will produce American coal to power American industry. We will transport American energy through American pipelines, made with American steel.”
- ☐ “Together, we will create millions of good American jobs -- also, so many energy jobs -- and really lead to unbelievable prosperity all throughout our country.”
- On June 28, 2016, then-candidate Donald Trump:
 - ☐ “It will be American hands that remake this country, and it will be American energy - mined from American resources - that powers this country.”
 - ☐ “We are also going to fully capture America’s tremendous energy capacity. This will create vast profits for our workers and begin reducing our deficit.”

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To: cam@limestone-strategies.com[cam@limestone-strategies.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 3:02:15 PM
Subject: FW: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

From: U.S. EPA Media Relations [mailto:no-replysubscriptions@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

May 12, 2017

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund sites, it was a successful week at EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states," Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009."

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no ‘environmental savior.’ *“Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration’s attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama’s tenure.”*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *“Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. ‘What’s so great about that record,’ he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. ‘I don’t quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.’”*

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because ‘they exceeded their statutory authority.’ ‘They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.’”*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *“Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA’s failure to fix Flint’s water system.”*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors. *“The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I’m sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it’s the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board.”*

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama’s administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. *“Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on “cooperative federalism” and working with the states.”*

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. *“[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott*

Pruitt to talk water issues.”

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. *“Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota’s ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery.”*

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. *“‘If you go back to the inception of the agency... Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,’ EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. ‘The past administration simply disregarded that,’ he continued.”*

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. *“Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state’s relationship with that federal agency. ‘The days of coercive federalism are over,’ new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum.”*

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. *“Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president’s new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota.”*

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule.”*

Oklahoma City’s KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. *“The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... ‘Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump administration,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma’s attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump’s administration.”*

R083

If you would rather not receive future communications from Environmental Protection Agency, let us know by clicking [here](#).
Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460 United States

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 1/8/2018 2:49:23 PM
Subject: RE: Harper's Magazine Inquiry: EPA Budget Questions

Ignore.

From: Victoria Uren [mailto:north@harpers.org]
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2018 9:38 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Harper's Magazine Inquiry: EPA Budget Questions

Hello,

I am writing to follow up on my earlier request. Ms. Enesta Jones of your office indicated to me that a member of staff would be in touch about these numbers soon – can I expect to hear back from somebody today?

Many thanks! Regards,

Victoria Uren

Editorial Assistant

Harper's Magazine

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New York, NY 10012

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On Fri, Jan 5, 2018 at 4:02 PM, Victoria Uren <north@harpers.org> wrote:

Hello,

I am writing to confirm some financial details concerning two recent EPA contracts.

First, can you verify that a \$24,570 contract was signed with Acoustical Solutions, LLC in August 2017? I have attached a copy of the USASpending.gov transaction record – do you mind confirming that the characterization of the product as "privacy booth for the administrator" is correct?

Second, can you also verify the amount of the contract that was signed between the EPA and Definers, the public-relations company based in Arlington?

I am on a rushed deadline, so if you could come back to me by midday Monday, 1/8, that would be most appreciated. Please don't hesitate to reach out for clarification or further information.

Many thanks for your help. Regards,

Victoria Uren

Editorial Assistant

Harper's Magazine

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 12/13/2017 10:47:37 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Biofuel, refiner backers seek deal at White House — Pruitt pushes LNG in Morocco — Murkowski upbeat on ANWR's fate in tax plan

By Anthony Adragna | 12/13/2017 05:45 AM EDT

With help from Emily Holden, Alex Guillén, Eric Wolff, Ben Lefebvre and Sara Stefanini

LET'S MAKE A DEAL? The White House is hoping it can get out of a bind between its oil industry supporters and its agricultural supporters by bringing representatives for the two groups together today for a preliminary meeting on a grand bargain for the Renewable Fuel Standard, Pro's Eric Wolff [reports](#). Refiners, with some backing from unions, say they're drowning under heavy RFS compliance costs, and the biofuel industry insists it needs the mandates in the RFS to keep expanding and to grow advanced biofuels.

Who's attending? Aides from the pro-ethanol Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#), [Joni Ernst](#) and [Deb Fischer](#) will be there for the corn-state contingent, while staffers for Sens. [Ted Cruz](#) and [Pat Toomey](#) will make the case for refiners. Staff from EPA, the Department of Agriculture and the National Economic Council will also join.

What about Congress? Sen. [Jim Inhofe](#) declined Tuesday to offer any details on the plan he and Sen. [John Cornyn](#) are working on to address the issue, but said it would have to address the exploding cost of buying biofuel credits that EPA uses to ensure refiners are blending the required amounts of biofuel into the nation's fuel supply. "The RIN values are a huge consideration because you're talking about millions and millions. And it wasn't meant to be that way. Anytime you have a value system that jumps around from eight cents to 800 dollars, that shows it's a broken system," Inhofe said.

Important context: Senators like Grassley are desperate to get Bill Northey, the nominee to be USDA undersecretary for farm production and conservation, confirmed since he'll play a crucial role in crafting the farm bill that lawmakers are three months behind schedule in drafting, Pro Agriculture's Catherine Boudreau [reports](#). Cruz, who was upbeat after last week's meeting but declined comment on Northey, placed a hold on his selection recently after corn-state Republicans extracted concessions from EPA on the RFS.

Can there be a bargain, grand or petite? Ethanol producers have been deeply skeptical of any kind of deal to be made with the oil industry, which they feel wants to squeeze them out of the fuels market if at all possible. But it's not even clear what parameters there are for a deal. University of Illinois economist Scott Irwin [said on Twitter](#), the mandates in the RFS drive up RIN costs. You can't push down RIN costs without undermining the mandates. "There is no 'win-win' on the RFS concerning mandates and RINs," he wrote in a thread. "Lower RINs prices go with lower mandates and vice versa. Straightforward economics."

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and API's Khary Cauthen was first to identify Erskine Bowles as the former White House chief of staff who lost

consecutive Senate bids in North Carolina. For today: Sens. [Bernie Sanders](#), [Angus King](#) and Joe Lieberman are well-known third-party senators. Who was the last independent senator to serve before them? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

Faster, Smarter Legislative Tracking: Don't wait until 2018 to try [Legislative Compass](#), POLITICO Pro's powerful, easy-to-use tool for federal and state legislative tracking. 2017 preferred pricing expires 12/31. [Start my trial](#).

NO MOORE: Sen.-elect Doug Jones [shocked the political world](#) by winning the Senate election in ruby-red Alabama on Tuesday evening, but it's worth pointing out he ran on a pretty [progressive platform](#) on environmental and climate change issues. His website says he "believe[s] in science" and opposed Trump's decision to leave the Paris accord. One thing to watch now is the committee shuffle: outgoing Sen. [Luther Strange](#) will vacate a spot on the Energy Committee (so some other Republican will get it).

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, PRUITT: EPA revealed Tuesday night that Administrator Scott Pruitt has been in Morocco this week promoting "the potential benefit of liquefied natural gas imports on Morocco's economy," as well as U.S.-Moroccan environmental cooperation. Pruitt's visit included a meeting with Morocco's energy minister to "discuss new and ongoing areas of collaboration under the Free Trade Agreement and the country's interest in importing LNG," according to EPA. The agency said he also met with top foreign affairs and justice officials. Morocco produces little natural gas and relies heavily on imports, although it also plans a major expansion of solar and wind power, according to the Energy Information Administration.

ROUNDUP FROM PARIS: The private sector took the center stage at the One Planet Summit in Paris Tuesday to show what they're willing and able to close the €179.6 billion (\$210.9 billion) a year gap between the investment needed to fulfill the goals of the Paris climate agreement and what's foreseen in policies adopted so far. POLITICO Europe's Sara Stefanini with [the roundup](#) and here's a sampling of the goings on:

— **Moving on from Trump:** Six months after Trump announced he wanted to leave the Paris agreement, the world is going ahead without him. "If we're here, so many of us today, it's because we've decided not to accept America's decision," French President Emmanuel Macron said [in a speech](#). Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry agreed when asked if non-state actors can make up for a lack of federal leadership: "It is possible, yes," he told reporters.

— **Carbon pricing in the Americas:** Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, the governors of California and Washington and the premiers of Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec [launched](#) a cooperative framework on carbon pricing.

— **ING ditches coal:** Dutch bank ING said that by the end of 2025 it [will quit financing](#) utilities that are over 5 percent reliant on coal-fired power in their energy mix. The bank already does not finance companies that are over 10 percent reliant on coal — up from ING's pre-Paris threshold of 50 percent. Greenpeace applauded the latest announcement.

YOU CAN'T DO THAT! Democrats vowed to keep a watchful eye after GAO found the Trump administration illegally withheld \$91 million budgeted for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program earlier this year, your ME host reports. Top Senate Energy Democrat Maria Cantwell said in a statement: "The President cannot ignore statutory requirements or funding direction provided by Congress. I expect nothing less than Secretary [Rick] Perry's full compliance with the law." DOE ultimately relented and released all the funds.

AROUND CONGRESS — EPW LOOKS AT NRC: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee gavels in at 9:45 a.m. to vote on R.D. James' nomination to run the Army Corps of Engineers and then holds an oversight hearing on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission immediately afterwards. Watch here.

Looking at solar energy deployment: A House Science subcommittee holds a hearing at 2 p.m. entitled "Advancing Solar Energy Technology: Research Trumps Deployment." Witnesses include: Daniel Simmons, principal deputy assistant secretary with DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and Martin Keller, director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Watch here.

Natural Resources holds mega-markup: Lawmakers on House Natural Resources Committee hold a markup of 15 bills today at 10 a.m. More information here.

Examining the future of North American energy trade: The House Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee holds a hearing entitled "The Impacts and Future of North American Energy Trade." Witnesses representing the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers and Resources for the Future appear. Background memo and watch here.

Congressional Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, rally at 10:30 a.m. to push lawmakers to protect pensions, including those of retired miners, from cuts as they weigh end-of-year spending legislation.

INTERIOR STAFF SHUFFLE INVITES LAWSUIT: Interior Department employee Matt Allen has filed a FOIA lawsuit in an effort to determine why he and other senior employees were suddenly transferred earlier this year. Interior's Inspector General's office is already investigating Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's plans to shuffle dozens of Senior Executive Service employees, and another now-former employee filed a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel and a lawsuit after being reassigned. Allen, who became a BLM spokesman in the waning days of the Obama administration, was reassigned to a public affairs position at BSEE in September. "My client's demotion reeks of reprisal, and these documents will provide us the tools we require to prove that," plaintiff's lawyer Katherine Atkinson said in a press release. An Interior spokesperson was not immediately available to comment.

NOT GIVING UP: Senate EPW Chairman John Barrasso told ME Tuesday he's not giving up on Michael Dourson's nomination to run EPA's chemicals office even as Republican defections have put a damper on his confirmation prospects. "It's a question of how Sen. McConnell chooses to prioritize them," the Wyoming Republican said, downplaying the challenges facing

Dourson, a former industry-funded toxicologist.

CURTAINS FOR GARRETT? Former New Jersey Rep. Scott Garrett, Trump's pick to run the Export-Import Bank, is likely to have his nomination blocked after Sen. Mike Rounds came out against his selection on Tuesday, Pro Financial Services' Zachary Warmbrodt reports. "I believe him to be a proponent of the abolition of the bank rather than a reformer of the bank," Rounds said. "I'm looking for reformers, not abolitionists." Garrett's selection has been roundly criticized by the business community. The Senate Banking Committee has 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats, so Rounds' defection would sink the selection in committee.

MURKOWSKI UPBEAT ON ANWR'S PROSPECTS: Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski told ME Tuesday she's optimistic language opening ANWR to oil and gas drilling will make it into the final Republican tax package H.R. 1 (115), even though a dozen of her House colleagues oppose its inclusion. "I'm feeling pretty good about where we are with ANWR right now," she said. "We just need to make sure that we're able to come together as conferees and get a package that both bodies can support."

Speaking of which, Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania and PennFuture are running a full page ad in the Philadelphia Inquirer today urging Republican Reps. Pat Meehan, Ryan Costello and Brian Fitzpatrick to vote against any final tax package that contains ANWR drilling. You'll remember they were three of the 12 House Republicans who said in the letter they opposed opening the Arctic area to oil and gas drilling.

Murkowski also said she wasn't ready to weigh in on whether Zinke's use of helicopters to attend Washington area events, like a horseback ride with Vice President Mike Pence, was appropriate until she got more information. "I think we all recognize that there is a responsibility that we have as lawmakers, when you're using the taxpayer dollar, that you do so in a responsible way and something that's not wasteful," she said. "But I also understand that there are sometimes requirements of the job that require you to perhaps take a different mode of transportation."

And she told your ME host she hadn't been following the ongoing battle between Patagonia and Zinke, but that she too had been irked by the outdoor clothing giant's advocacy for barring drilling in ANWR last year. "Last Christmas, I actually looked at the Patagonia catalog that came to my house," Murkowski said. "I didn't think they were marketing their outdoor clothing. It was a full on effort to build support for turning ANWR into wilderness ... It was enough to get me, as a consumer, riled up enough to say 'I'm not buying Patagonia products.'"

UNUSUAL MOVE IN VIRGINIA: A state panel granted the Atlantic Coast pipeline's water quality permits, but took the unusual step of delaying their effective date until soil and erosion control plans and stormwater management plans are finished, the Associated Press reports. "While this is most definitely not what Dominion wanted and gives opponents of the pipeline more time to push for rejection, the [Virginia State Water Control Board] should have rejected the certificate outright," Lorne Stockman with Oil Change International said in a statement.

SOLAR FOR SAMARITANS: EPA says it's partnering with the non-governmental organizations in Puerto Rico to provide generators or solar panels to run drinking water pumps

and wells that supply water to 3 percent of the population and are not managed by the island's government. EPA and other U.S. and Puerto Rican agencies are working with Water Mission, Samaritan's Purse, Project Hope and RCAP Solutions. Solar panels have been installed in four communities and will be provided to four more before Christmas, EPA said in a press release.

More than two months after Hurricane Maria hit, about 43 percent of island residents didn't have power and 17 percent didn't have drinkable water, according to statistics issued on November 20 by the U.S. territory's government. The Natural Resources Defense Council [finds](#) that, according to government test results, more than two-thirds of the population was at potential risk of exposure to bacterial contamination in water systems.

MAIL CALL! SICK OF THOSE TALKING POINTS: The EPW Democrats asked Kathleen Hartnett White, nominee to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality, to redo her responses to questions for the record after they contained identical language as previous nominees. Link [here](#).

DON'T DO IT! The Environmental Working Group is urging Toyota in [a letter](#) not to enter into a management partnership with EPA as Pruitt suggested the automaker was going to do at a congressional hearing last week. "By partnering with Mr. Pruitt's EPA, you are aiding and publicly aligning yourself with his irresponsible agenda," EWG President Ken Cook wrote, warning Toyota it risked "irreparable harm" to its brand by pairing with Pruitt.

LEARNING FROM THE DRUG COMPANIES? The Hamilton Project at Brookings is out with a report today arguing energy research and development could be improved by implementing some practices from the pharmaceutical industry. Those include: Creating a strong system of contract research, implementing consistent technical standards and offering better incentives for electric utilities to deploy and test new technologies. Link [here](#).

TAKE A GLANCE! Texans for Natural Gas is out with [an analysis](#) this morning finding that even as exports of natural gas have increased dramatically, prices have fallen. That goes against the previous [predictions](#) of the Energy Information Administration, which warned more exports would cause price spikes.

SPOTTED: Energy Secretary Rick Perry receiving the Ronald Reagan Award from the Texas Public Policy Foundation on Tuesday night. Pics [here](#) ... Zinke and his wife, Lola, walking through the White House's Christmas decorations. Pic [here](#).

LIGHTER CLICK: NRDC trustee Robert Redford made a video asking people to urge Congress to vote against the final tax package because of the provision opening ANWR to drilling. Watch [here](#).

QUICK HITS

— JEA wants out of struggling nuclear power deal, disputes negative credit report. [Jacksonville.com](#).

- Former Republican EPA chiefs blast controversial Alaska mining project. [The Hill](#).
- State panel urges temporary shutdown of Mackinac pipeline. [AP](#).
- National Park Service slashes number of free-access days from 10 to four in 2018. [Denver Post](#).
- Trump's Stand-In Bureaucrats May Have Overstayed Limits. [Bloomberg](#).
- Top Interior Official Stayed At Montana Resort That Secretary Zinke's Billionaire Friend And Donor Owns. [Huffington Post](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:45 a.m. — "[Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#)" and [Business Meeting](#), Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Committee holds [markup](#) of 16 bills, Longworth 1324

10:30 a.m. — Congressional Democrats, including Leaders Schumer and Pelosi, rally to protect workers' pensions, Senate Visitors Center rooms 208-209

10:15 a.m. — "[The Impacts and Future of North American Energy Trade](#)," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2322

1:30 a.m. — "[Advancing U.S. Innovation by Reforming Patent and R&D Policy](#)," The Hamilton Project at Brookings, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW

2:00 p.m. — "[Advancing Solar Energy Technology: Research Trumps Deployment](#)," House Science, Space and Technology Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2318

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/biofuel-refiner-backers-seek-deal-at-white-house-049656>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

White House to host Senate staff for biofuels talks [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 12/12/2017 04:16 PM EDT

The White House will host a meeting Wednesday with Senate staffers in the hopes of striking a deal between oil refiners and biofuel producers who have clashed over the Renewable Fuel Standard, sources tell POLITICO.

A White House aide confirmed the meeting would take place. Sources said it's a preliminary conversation intended to explore whether a deal can be reached to both help refiners, who say they are struggling with the costs of complying with the RFS, and continue supporting the biofuel industry that has matured under the RFS.

Industry sources and Republican Senate aides say that staff for pro-ethanol Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa) and [Joni Ernst](#) (R-Iowa) will attend, and aides to Sens. [Ted Cruz](#) (R-Texas) and [Pat Toomey](#) (R-Pa.) will be there to represent refiners. Staff from EPA, the Department of Agriculture, and the National Economic Council will also join the meeting.

A spokeswoman for Sen. [Deb Fischer](#) (R-Neb.) said her staff would also be attending the meeting, which was first reported by Reuters.

Midwestern senators scored a win when they forced EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to backtrack on efforts to alter parts of the RFS, but Cruz forced the White House to get involved after he put a hold on Bill Northey, who is up for a USDA undersecretary position.

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Grassley: Senate Ag is 3 months behind in drafting farm bill [Back](#)

By Catherine Boudreau | 12/12/2017 11:10 AM EDT

Sen. [Chuck Grassley](#) said today that senators are three months behind schedule in drafting the next farm bill and that he had previously anticipated the Agriculture Committee would have advanced legislation before Christmas.

"We can't horse around any longer," Grassley told reporters during a conference call, adding that the farm bill should be finished in the first half of next year so producers have predictability.

Senate Agriculture Chairman [Pat Roberts](#), during an [interview](#) on C-SPAN on Sunday, said he is aiming to have the panel finish a farm bill "blueprint" by February and to bring the measure to the Senate floor in early spring.

A factor that could thwart progress on drafting the farm bill is the uncertainty surrounding Bill Northey, the nominee to be USDA undersecretary for farm production and conservation, who has not been confirmed, Grassley said.

Northey, the Iowa agriculture secretary, continues to see his nomination held by Sen. [Ted Cruz](#). He would oversee three agencies that implement key farm bill programs, including loans, commodity subsidies, crop insurance and conservation.

Cruz placed a hold on Northey in retaliation after corn-state lawmakers — Grassley included — used political power to stymie a recent effort by the EPA to weaken the Renewable Fuel Standard. Cruz and other oil-state lawmakers believe those changes create the potential for job losses among refiners, and held up Northey until a meeting with the White House could be arranged.

Cruz and company left a meeting with President Donald Trump on Thursday with a directive to find a compromise with their colleagues, but the Texas Republican did not comment on whether he'd let Northey advance.

Grassley said he hopes Northey doesn't get fed up with the politics of Washington and withdraw from consideration. He said he doesn't have any indication Northey would do that, however.

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Alabama earthquake: Democrat Jones wins [Back](#)

By Daniel Strauss | 12/12/2017 06:08 PM EDT

Democrat Doug Jones defeated Roy Moore in a special election earthquake Tuesday, flipping an Alabama Senate seat to Democrats for the first time in a quarter-century and dealing a huge political setback to President Donald Trump.

The Associated Press called the race for Jones, a former U.S. attorney, who had 49.9 percent of the vote to Moore's 48.4 percent with all precincts reporting — a difference of more than 21,000 votes.

Still, Moore declined to concede, saying there were still military and other votes that need to be counted. Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill told CNN it would be "highly unusual and highly unlikely" for the outstanding ballots to change the results of the race.

In Alabama, an automatic recount is triggered when the margin between the two candidates is under 0.5 percentage points. A candidate, however, has the option of seeking a recount if the margin is wider than that but has to pay for it, Merrill said.

Barring a miracle, all of that pointed to a victory for Jones.

"I am truly overwhelmed," the Democratic told ebullient supporters in a Birmingham hotel ballroom after the race was called. "At the end of the day, this entire race has been about dignity and respect. This campaign has been about the rule of law. This campaign has been about common courtesy and decency."

Jones' win — after Moore was accused of sexual assault and other misconduct by multiple

women — will shrink Republicans' already tenuous Senate majority to 51-49, just as the party approaches final consideration of its sweeping tax bill and prepares for the 2018 midterm elections in a difficult political environment.

Moore's loss does relieve Senate Republicans from one burden: Considering whether they would expel him from the chamber if he won. But the party will have a reed-thin margin for error in the coming months as it tries to push through its agenda. And Moore's defeat was a major setback for Trump, who gave the candidate a full-throated endorsement in the final days of the race, in a state he carried with over 60 percent of the vote in 2016.

"Congratulations to Doug Jones on a hard fought victory," Trump tweeted. "The write-in votes played a very big factor, but a win is a win. The people of Alabama are great, and the Republicans will have another shot at this seat in a very short period of time. It never ends!"

The election is also a major defeat for the president's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, who as the head of Breitbart led a bare-knuckles campaign to elect Moore and drag down Jones. Bannon had cast the race as an existential showdown between the activist base and Washington elites, but only to wind up on the losing end.

The president set up the election as one with outsized consequences for his administration and the GOP, tweeting repeatedly that Alabama could not afford to elect Jones. Trump also praised Moore at a rally in nearby Pensacola, Florida, and the Republican National Committee injected late money into the race after Trump reengaged.

It was a surreal scene at Moore's election night gathering in Montgomery.

The night started out with tons of energy in the room, but it dissipated as the vote returns accumulated until eventually the room fell silent. After the race was called but before Moore delivered his concession speech, a man took the stage and sang Christmas hymns.

When Moore emerged, he would not say the race was over, telling supporters that he wanted to consult with the secretary of state's office about next steps.

"Part of the problem with this campaign is we've been painted in unfavorable and unfaithful light," Jones said. "We've been put in a hole, if you will."

Trump's late play for Moore went against the will of Senate Republicans, who abandoned Moore after women came forward to say that Moore had pursued relationships with them when they were teenagers and he was in his 30s, including one who described sexual contact with Moore when she was 14.

"The people of Alabama deemed Roy Moore unfit to serve in the U.S. Senate," said National Republican Senatorial Committee chairman Cory Gardner, who had called for Moore to be thrown out of the Senate if elected. "I hope Senator-elect Doug Jones will do the right thing and truly represent Alabama by choosing to vote with the Senate Republican Majority."

Steven Law, the president of the super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, blamed Bannon for Jones' victory.

"This is a brutal reminder that candidate quality matters regardless of where you are running," Law said in a statement. "Not only did Steve Bannon cost us a critical Senate seat in one of the most Republican states in the country, but he also dragged the President of the United States into his fiasco."

As Moore's campaign fought scandal, Jones became cause of national Democrats eager to defeat the Republican. Online donors flooded his campaign with money as Jones criss-crossed Alabama focusing on what he called "kitchen table issues" (and rarely mentioning his party). His TV ads blanketed the airwaves, hammering Moore as a sexual predator while also introducing Jones as a Second Amendment-supporting federal prosecutor who had convicted Ku Klux Klansmen involved in the bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church during the civil rights era.

Jones rode a surge of energy among black voters and got a key bump from white-collar suburbanites who often vote Republican but turned away from the controversial Moore. The GOP nominee's history of inflammatory comments about women, Muslims and LGBT people had already damaged his standing — and the sexual misconduct allegations scared more voters away.

Moore still won college-educated white voters 57 percent to 41 percent, according to the National Election Pool exit poll — but the group shifted hard in Democrats' direction compared to past Alabama elections.

Trump prompted the special election by nominating former Sen. Jeff Sessions to be his attorney general. Jones will replace appointed Republican Sen. Luther Strange and will hold the Senate seat until 2020, when Sessions' old term expires.

Alex Isenstadt contributed to this report.

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GAO: Administration illegally withheld \$91 million in ARPA-E funds [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 12/12/2017 05:17 PM EDT

The Trump administration violated federal law when it withheld \$91 million budgeted for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program earlier this year, the GAO said in a [letter](#) released today.

House Science Committee ranking member [Eddie Bernice Johnson](#) (D-Texas) [asked](#) GAO to investigate in May amid [reports](#) the agency was withholding money for grants that were already

approved. In a Nov. 29 letter to GAO, the agency confirmed all funds had been released to be dispensed.

"I hope that the Administration now understands that Federal agencies must provide lawfully directed appropriations to the programs to which they are dedicated," Johnson said in a statement. "It cannot attempt to shut down an agency or starve a program it doesn't like by withholding funds. It is illegal and we in Congress will not allow it."

ARPA-E, which the Trump administration proposed eliminating entirely in its budget this year, selects energy technology projects and awards funding as those ventures meet a series of development milestones.

The Energy Department didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

WHAT'S NEXT: Congress must decide how much funding to award ARPA-E in the future.

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Interior IG probing Zinke's senior staff reshuffle [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 09/08/2017 05:09 PM EDT

The Interior Department's internal watchdog has launched a probe into Secretary Ryan Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, an official told POLITICO today.

The inspector general's office is auditing Zinke's decision to reassign dozens of senior executive service employees, including Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. The office has begun interviewing key agency staff and asked the secretary's office to hand over documents, IG spokeswoman Nancy DiPaolo said.

The audit follows a request in July from Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and seven of her colleagues for Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall to look into the matter.

Depending on what the audit uncovers, it could lead to a broader investigation to determine whether any laws were broken.

WHAT'S NEXT: DiPaolo said the IG hopes to wrap up its work within a few months.

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Interior official files whistleblower complaint over job reassignment [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre | 07/19/2017 07:06 PM EDT

A former senior Interior Department official has filed a whistleblower complaint after the agency transferred him from a leadership position focused on climate change to a desk job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

In a [complaint](#) and [disclosure](#) filing with the Office of Special Counsel and in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), former Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement claimed he was [reassigned](#) to a position at the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to stop him from publicly discussing climate change impacts on native Alaskan coastal communities.

Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff reassigned to other jobs in June.

Clement told POLITICO no Interior political staffers ever raised concerns about his activities prior to his reassignment. "It was kind of obvious to reassign the climate adaptation experts to the accounting office where they collect fossil fuel royalty checks. That was pretty flagrant, I would say, in terms of sending the message. So that message was received loud and clear that they wanted me to quit."

Clement said he'd like his old job back, and he hoped other staff would also complain.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said the personnel moves were "conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations."

Clement may have difficulty proving his case because agencies have wide discretion to reassign staff, according to Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "It sounds like he's being retaliated against because of his job, not because of any disclosure he made," Ruch said. "He's suffering due to the nature of his job, and maybe because he did it too well."

Annie Snider contributed to this report.

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Dourson at risk of rejection as more Republicans lean no [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano and Anthony Adragna | 11/16/2017 05:55 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's nominee to a key chemical safety job at the EPA is at risk of rejection after Republican senators balked amid accusations that he is too eager to cover for companies

peddling dangerous products.

North Carolina's two GOP senators have said they will vote against confirming Michael Dourson as an EPA assistant administrator, citing a record that included work on a chemical linked to cancer deaths near a Marine Corps base in their home state. And Maine Republican Susan Collins said Thursday that she is leaning no as well — a vote that would be enough to sink his nomination.

Democrats are optimistic about turning four additional Republicans who they believe should be in play based on contamination issues back home.

Republican leaders have not decided what to do about Dourson's nomination, Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said Thursday.

"We'll have to see whether it's a viable nomination, and with two against him obviously that doesn't leave us a lot of room," Cornyn told POLITICO. "We haven't made a decisions on that yet, but we'll be revisiting it."

Critics say Dourson, a former industry-funded toxicologist, regularly downplayed the risks of chemicals such as PFOA and trichloroethylene that are contaminating soil and water in communities across the country. Dourson has already begun working at EPA as a senior adviser to Administrator Scott Pruitt, an arrangement Democrats have condemned as improper.

"There are all these local contamination issues across the country that have been bubbling up recently or have been out there for years, and because Dourson is this hired gun ... he's almost by nature of his job been working on these really controversial chemicals," said Jack Pratt, chemicals campaign director for the Environmental Defense Fund, which opposes Dourson's nomination.

Republican North Carolina Sens. Thom Tillis and Richard Burr said Wednesday that they could not support Dourson because of his past work as a toxicologist who was frequently hired by industry to rebut public health concerns about chemicals. Collins said Thursday that she is "leaning against" confirming him.

A legislative aide said Democrats are eyeing Republican Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Bob Corker of Tennessee and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, although Flake, Toomey and Corker told POLITICO they're still undecided.

"Sen. Toomey remains concerned about the PFOA issue in Bucks County and Montgomery County and remains dedicated to addressing it," a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Republican said, naming two Philadelphia-area counties where toxic firefighting chemicals leached into the ground from two closed naval bases. Toomey is reviewing the nomination "with these concerns in mind," but the spokesman did not say how he plans to vote.

However, even if the nomination is pulled or rejected, Dourson will still be able to influence EPA's implementation of a major chemical safety law because he has already started working at

the agency. Democrats have criticized that arrangement, though EPA says previous administrations allowed people to begin working there before being confirmed.

EPA's chemical safety office, which Dourson has been nominated to lead, has a heavy workload after Congress in 2016 passed a bipartisan law updating the Toxic Substances Control Act for the first time in nearly 40 years. The office has been charged with evaluating the safety of chemicals already in use and determining how to test new chemicals before they are allowed into the marketplace.

The near-universal support TSCA reform won in Congress last year may help explain the wariness among lawmakers about giving chemical industry allies too much of a foothold in EPA.

"They wanted to give the public some assurance that the products on their shelf are safe, and when you put the chemical industry in charge that's not going to happen," said Madeleine Foote, a legislative representative with the League of Conservation Voters.

Tillis and Burr stopped short of calling for Dourson to step down from his existing position at the agency. "I'll leave that up to the EPA to decide," Tillis told POLITICO.

Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), who has supported several Trump nominees, said he would vote against Dourson but not object to him continuing to work at EPA.

Before joining EPA last month, Dourson was a professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine's Risk Science Center, and he founded the nonprofit Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment, which was often conducted industry-funded research. He also previously worked at EPA from 1980 to 1995. Past clients of Dourson and his research group have included Dow Chemical, Koch Industries and Chevron, according to the Associated Press.

Critics say Dourson's research routinely concluded that chemicals were safer in far higher concentrations than those recommended by agencies like EPA, putting communities at greater risk of finding toxic substances like perchlorate, TCE or PFOA in their air or drinking water.

Pratt said Dourson's work followed a pattern.

"Over and over again these chemical companies would hire him, he'd look at the research, and say the standard that EPA or whatever regulatory body has is too strict — it should be looser," Pratt said.

EPA defended the nominee.

"Dr. Michael Dourson is a highly qualified scientist to lead EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said in a statement. "He worked at EPA for 15 years, founded a program that characterized the health hazards of chemicals, performed pro-bono work that saved a family near Cincinnati and his expertise on TCE contamination resulted in settlements that helped 130 families outside of San Francisco."

Dourson told the Environment and Public Works Committee at his confirmation hearing last month that he did not have a thumb on the scale.

"I can give you as many or more examples of situations where the science that we brought forward as a team actually lowered the safe dose or risk position for various sponsors," Dourson told Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) at the hearing. "If confirmed, I will rely on the guidance of EPA ethics officials."

Tillis and Burr said they could not support Dourson based on his record and North Carolina's history of chemical pollution problems, such drinking water at Camp Lejeune that was contaminated for decades by chemicals including trichloroethylene. TCE is one of the first 10 chemicals EPA must evaluate under the new safety law, but Dourson has previously endorsed health standards that are 1.5 to 15 times less protective than those backed by other researchers, according to EDF.

Retired Marine Corps Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger, whose daughter died of leukemia linked to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, met with Tills and aides to Burr to urge their opposition, according to the Wilmington Star News.

Among his other industry-funded work, Dourson appeared before an EPA scientific advisory panel session concerning the pesticide chlorpyrifos on behalf of CropLife America. He led a 2008 paper on acrylamide, which can form during high-temperature cooking of some starchy foods, that received funding from major food companies like Burger King, Frito-Lay and McDonald's. And he studied 1-bromopropane, a solvent linked to some neurological and reproductive disorders, in 2004 with funding from Albemarle Corp. and Ameribrom Inc.

In all cases, he recommended standards many factors less protective than public health and EPA research suggested.

He also has done work for industry-friendly state governments. In the early 2000s, Dourson helped West Virginia set drinking water guidance limits for PFOA, also known as perfluorooctanoic acid or C8, at 150 parts per billion. That was 150 times less protective than manufacturer DuPont's own internal standard of 1 part per billion and more than 2,000 times less protective than EPA's recommendation of 70 parts per trillion.

During his confirmation hearing, Dourson argued that the research had evolved significantly since his recommendation to West Virginia, saying that "the science has progressed, significantly advanced since the time of 2004 and the new science indicates a lower level." And he defended the integrity of his work overall.

"Throughout my career — with EPA, TERA and now with the University of Cincinnati — I have been objective in my work and applied sound science to come to my conclusions," Dourson said.

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Trump Ex-Im Bank nominee will likely be blocked [Back](#)

By Zachary Warmbrodt | 12/12/2017 04:20 PM EDT

Scott Garrett, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Export-Import Bank, will likely be blocked by bipartisan opposition after he struggled to convince lawmakers that he should run an agency he once tried to kill in Congress.

Garrett's fate was all but sealed Tuesday when Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) said he would oppose the former congressman's confirmation when it comes up for a vote at the Senate Banking Committee on Dec. 19. The panel has 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats, and all the Democrats are expected to oppose Garrett.

"I believe him to be a proponent of the abolition of the bank rather than a reformer of the bank," Rounds told POLITICO. "I'm looking for reformers, not abolitionists."

Rounds had raised concerns that small contractors in his state could be hurt if their larger customers lost access to financing. U.S. companies rely on the agency to provide loan guarantees to the foreign buyers of American exports.

If Garrett's nomination were blocked or withdrawn, it would be a major victory for companies and manufacturing groups, including Boeing and the National Association of Manufacturers. They have fought to stop his Senate confirmation based on his record of trying to shut down the bank while serving in Congress.

Before losing reelection in his New Jersey district last year, Garrett said the bank "embodies the corruption of the free enterprise system." As he tried to save his nomination in recent months, he struck a less aggressive tone and pledged publicly to keep the bank running.

Garrett's attempts to shore up support fell flat, and opposition to his nomination could grow before next Tuesday's vote.

Other Republicans on the committee said they had not yet made up their minds.

Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.), whose vote is one of the most closely watched on the panel, represents a state that's home to plants operated by Boeing and GE, two of the bank's most prominent beneficiaries. He has raised concerns with Garrett's record but has not announced how he would vote.

"My attention's all on the tax reform package," Scott said in an interview today. "I'm sure I'll have enough time before Tuesday to come to a decision."

Asked if Garrett will drop out or if the White House is looking for a new nominee, an

administration official told POLITICO, "We plan on having a vote."

The administration has warned for months that if Garrett failed to advance then GOP lawmakers critical of the bank would hold up the confirmation of other nominees to head the agency. Sens. Pat Toomey (R-Penn.) and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) have threatened to derail other Ex-Im appointees if Garrett were not cleared.

Four less controversial nominees for the bank's board are also scheduled for a committee vote on Dec. 19, and they're expected to move forward. Their confirmation would help the bank's board regain a quorum that's needed to approve transactions worth more than \$10 million.

Shelby said on Tuesday that if Garrett were blocked, "a lot of us will probably vote against all of them," but he conceded that "we're probably outliers — the minority."

In an interview Friday, White House director of legislative affairs Marc Short declined to say what the administration would do if Garrett fell short of the necessary votes in committee.

"There are some who look at it myopically and will say, 'Here's your challenge in committee,'" Short said. "But I think focusing on the committee in and of itself doesn't factor in other members of Congress who will oppose a different nominee."

Underscoring the wedge that the Export-Import Bank has driven between Republicans, manufacturers on Tuesday applauded Rounds for announcing his opposition, while conservative groups went on the attack.

"Sen. Rounds is placing special interests and lobbyists above the interests of the American people," Club for Growth President David McIntosh said. "A vote against Scott Garrett is a vote for business as usual in Washington. Rounds' opposition will serve to protect the swamp and its creatures rather drain it."

Andrew Restuccia contributed to this report.

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ANWR drilling in tax bill draws opposition from a dozen House Republicans [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano | 11/30/2017 06:33 PM EDT

A dozen House Republicans raised concerns today about a rider in the Senate tax bill that would allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The lawmakers did not mention the tax bill by name in [their letter](#), and they stopped short of promising to pull their support if ANWR drilling is included. But they said they had "concerns

with any proposal that would implement an oil and gas leasing program in the Refuge" and questioned whether new drilling there was necessary.

"Further, the resources beneath the Refuge's Coastal Plain simply are not necessary for our nation's energy independence," wrote Reps. [Brian Fitzpatrick](#), [Dave Reichert](#) and 10 of their GOP colleagues.

Six of the 12 lawmakers already voted against the House tax bill earlier this month, citing objections such as its elimination of the state and local tax deduction.

Opening ANWR is a priority for Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#), a key swing vote in the upper chamber, which hopes to pass its version of the bill as soon as this week.

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Zinke booked government helicopters to attend D.C. events [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 12/07/2017 06:31 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke spent more than \$14,000 on government helicopters this summer to take himself and staff to and from official events near Washington, D.C., in order to accommodate his attendance at a swearing-in ceremony for his replacement in Congress and a horseback ride with Vice President Mike Pence, according to previously undisclosed official travel documents.

The travel logs, released to POLITICO via a Freedom of Information Act request, show Zinke using taxpayer-funded vehicles from the U.S. Park Police to help accommodate his political events schedule.

In a case detailed in the new documents, Zinke ordered a U.S. Park Police helicopter to take him and his chief of staff, Scott Hommel, to an emergency management exercise in Shepherdstown, W.Va., on June 21.

Zinke's staff justified the \$8,000 flight by saying official business would prevent him leaving Washington before 2 p.m., too late to make the two-hour drive to the exercise, according to the documents.

The event that prevented Zinke from leaving before 2 p.m. was the swearing-in ceremony for Rep. Greg Gianforte (R-Mont.), according to Zinke's [official Interior calendar](#). Gianforte, who won a special election for Zinke's old seat in May after assaulting a reporter, contributed along with his wife \$15,800 to Zinke's two congressional campaigns.

"Secretary Zinke's last engagement in Washington D.C. is at 2 p.m.," an Interior staffer wrote as

justification for using the helicopter. "Driving to [the West Virginia event] would not enable him to be on time and fully participate as scheduled."

Interior defended the trips.

"The swearing in of the Congressman is absolutely an official event, as is emergency management training," Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email Thursday. "Shame on you for not respecting the office of a Member of Congress."

Zinke also ordered a Park Police helicopter to fly him and another Interior official to and from Yorktown, Va., on July 7 in order to be back in Washington in time for a 4 p.m. horseback ride with Pence. The trip cost about \$6,250, according to the documents.

The horseback ride through Rock Creek Park also included Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and CMS Administrator Seema Verma, according to a [post](#) on Pence's Facebook page.

While in Yorktown, Zinke completed a walking tour of the local Revolutionary War battlefield and attended a boating industry roundtable discussion, according to the documents. The day before the trip, an Interior trip planner added to the schedule a 30-minute flyover of an area where Dominion Energy [is building](#) high-voltage electric transmission lines to run across the James River.

Interior officials originally estimated that driving to Yorktown would take about three hours, although one noted that "there is a major construction project on I-64, which will slow things down."

In an email to Interior travel scheduler Tim Nigborowicz, an Interior employee justified Zinke's using the helicopter instead of less expensive method by saying "the Secretary will be able to familiarize himself with the in-flight capabilities of an aircraft he is in charge of" and that the Park Police staff on board would "provide an added measure of security to the Secretary during his travel."

Interior officials certified ahead of the flight that Zinke's use of the helicopter would not compromise law enforcement obligations.

The Park Police helicopter, [Eagle One](#), is deployed for medevac and emergency response situations around Washington, a part of its mission Zinke praised later that month.

"U.S. Park Service helicopter pilot and crew provided a life-saving medevac flight during the attack on members of Congress during baseball practice," Zinke said in the July 25 [video](#) celebrating American Heroes Week.

The former Montana congressman and Navy SEAL is [already being investigated](#) by the Interior Department's Inspector General and the independent Office of Special Counsel for his [mixing of official travel and political events](#). Interior earlier this year released records documenting Zinke's use of charter and military aircraft, including a \$12,000 flight from Las Vegas to Montana that

allowed him to give a speech for a hockey team owned by a major campaign donor.

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Daily Wrap

African American Career World magazine (Katie McKy) – Profile of African American employee who loves his/her work.

Argus (Chris Knight) — Unified agenda on GHG program for vehicles.

Associated Press (John Flesher) – Confirmation that Cathy Stepp will be named new Region 5 Administrator.

Bloomberg Environment (Pat Rizzuto) – Asbestos information from industry groups.

Bloomberg Environment (Jennifer Lu) – Timeframe for issuing 120 day letters for ozone designations.

CBS Digital (Katie Watson); CNN (Rene Marsh); New York Times (Lisa Friedman) – Press clippings contract with Definers.

Climate Observatory and Oeco (Claudio Angelo) –Nature magazine profile of Administrator.

CQ Roll Call (Jackie Toth) – Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee Meeting.

E&E News (Sean Reilly); Houston Public Media (Travis Bubenik) – Texas haze plan lawsuit.

Inside Climate News (Marianne Lavelle) – Regulatory/deregulatory actions and ozone.

Inside EPA (Stuart Parker) – Ozone Co-operative Compliance Task Force.

Law 360 (Christine Powell) – Comments on Clean Water Rule

NBC National News (Suzy Khimm) – Lead and copper rule.

POLITICO (Christine Haughney) – Neonics assessments.

POLITICO (Emily Holden) – Confirming retirement of Steve Page and Peter Tsirigotis as new OAQPS lead.

Spectrum News Network (Silvia Gambardella) – Regulation of chemicals.

Vermont Digger (Mike Polhamus) – Clean air lawsuit.

VICE News (Alex Lubben) – Flooding at EPA.

Wall Street Journal (Tim Puko) – Dr. Michael Dourson’s role with EPA.

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EPA consultant is investigating anti-Trump ‘resistance’ within the agency: report

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[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/daily-on-energy-trump-to-ignore-climate-change-in-national-security-strategy/article/2177064](#)

TRUMP WILL IGNORE CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/daily-on-energy-trump-to-ignore-climate-change-in-national-security-strategy/article/2177064](#)

GROUPS SUE EPA’S PRUITT OVER DELAY OF COAL POLLUTION RULES

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[http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125183580&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A](#)

EPA to Kick Off Clean Power Plan Replacement Squabble

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[https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069221/search?keyword=EPA](#)

White House huddles with industry on climate deal

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<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069217/search?keyword=EPA>

Interview: Wyo. Governor wants to address climate to help coal

-

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365163-week-ahead-arctic-drilling-measure-nears-finish-line>

Week ahead: Arctic Drilling measure nears finish line

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http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=125183576&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Farmworker Protection Rule Rewrite Could Stall Pivotal Funding

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<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060069219/search?keyword=EPA>

The man who stormed out of Pruitt's EPA

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060069237/search?keyword=EPA>

Congress faces another shutdown deadline this week

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/a-zero-tolerance-policy-for-trumps-zero-experience-nominees/article/2643681>

OPINION: A zero-tolerance policy for Trump's zero-experience nominees

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<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/green-groups-threaten-lawsuits-to-fight-epa-reorganization/article/2643698>

Green groups threaten lawsuits to fight EPA reorganization

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<https://townhall.com/tipsheet/cortneyobrien/2017/12/16/heres-how-many-people-have-left-the-epa-since-scott-pruitt-took-over-n2423067>

Here's How Many People Have Left the EPA Since Scott Pruitt Took Over

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<http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/16/opinions/epa-cuts-make-public-health-emergency-krupp-opinion/index.html>

OPINION: EPA cuts could risk a public health emergency

-

<https://insideepa.com/daily-feed/ewire-pruitts-red-team-climate-debate-hold>

Pruitt's 'red team' climate debate on hold

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 1/9/2018 3:37:33 PM
Subject: RE: Harper's Magazine Inquiry: EPA Budget Questions

Ignore.

From: Victoria Uren [mailto:north@harpers.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 9, 2018 10:35 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Harper's Magazine Inquiry: EPA Budget Questions

Hello,

Will it be possible for me to receive confirmation of the details indicated above by end of day today?

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you are in need of further clarification or information. I can be reached by phone at (212) 420-5753, though of course email is fine too.

Thanks for all your help! Best,

Victoria Uren

Editorial Assistant

Harper's Magazine

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+1(212) 420-5753

On Mon, Jan 8, 2018 at 9:38 AM, Victoria Uren <north@harpers.org> wrote:

Hello,

I am writing to follow up on my earlier request. Ms. Enesta Jones of your office indicated to me that a member of staff would be in touch about these numbers soon – can I expect to hear back from somebody today?

Many thanks! Regards,

Victoria Uren

Editorial Assistant

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On Fri, Jan 5, 2018 at 4:02 PM, Victoria Uren <north@harpers.org> wrote:

Hello,

I am writing to confirm some financial details concerning two recent EPA contracts.

First, can you verify that a \$24,570 contract was signed with Acoustical Solutions, LLC in August 2017? I have attached a copy of the USASpending.gov transaction record – do you mind confirming that the characterization of the product as "privacy booth for the administrator" is correct?

Second, can you also verify the amount of the contract that was signed between the EPA and Definers, the public-relations company based in Arlington?

I am on a rushed deadline, so if you could come back to me by midday Monday, 1/8, that would be most appreciated. Please don't hesitate to reach out for clarification or further information.

Many thanks for your help. Regards,

Victoria Uren

Editorial Assistant

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 10:42:15 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: Sizing up the tax bill's energy provisions — Turn your shutdown countdown clocks back on — National Security Strategy could drop climate change as security threat

By Anthony Adragna | 12/18/2017 05:40 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Eric Wolff and Emily Holden

POISED FOR TAX PACKAGE PASSAGE: Congressional Republicans are poised this week to pass a massive tax package [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), and the final text that emerged Friday evening was mostly good news for the renewables industry that had been unnerved by provisions in earlier versions. And the package will realize a decades-old GOP dream of opening the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling that Speaker [Paul Ryan](#)'s office hailed as "a win for American energy" Sunday. Check out some of the highlights via Pro's Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre [here](#).

—**Spared:** The final bill leaves wind and solar tax credits untouched, meaning they will continue to be phased down as originally envisioned in a 2015 bill. It preserves a tax break for electric vehicles and restores credits for abandoned oil wells and enhanced oil recovery that the House-passed bill removed. And it keeps a provision allowing utilities to continue to deduct interest on loans without the limitation placed on other businesses.

—**What's on oil's mind?** The bill keeps Senate language permitting the selloff of up to \$600 million in Strategic Petroleum Reserve oil if revenues from opening ANWR drilling come up short of the \$1 billion forecast, as many critics have warned is likely. It adds a provision offering deductions to investors in master limited partnerships, the corporate structure for many pipeline companies. And it temporarily lifts the cap on Gulf of Mexico oil and gas production revenue sharing to facilitate additional coastal restoration and protection projects.

—**Can't stop the BEAT:** Senate taxwriters made an effort to tweak the Base Erosion Anti-Abuse Tax in ways that would help renewable project developers. The tax is intended to keep U.S. profits domestic — but the final version doesn't go far enough to solve the problem in earlier iterations, renewables backers say. The fix in the conference bill allows banks to take 80 percent of the production tax credit and investment tax credit until 2025, but also expands which institutions are affected and makes other tweaks. "We are uncertain how the marketplace will react to the fact that more multi-national firms may now be covered by the BEAT, and tax credits may not all be useable in any given year," Gregory Wetstone, president and CEO of the ACORE, said in a statement. If you really want to get down and dirty with the BEAT and how other parts of the tax bill affected renewable projects, check out [this blog](#) post by Keith Martin, the co-head of U.S. projects for the law firm of Norton Rose Fulbright.

—**Not there:** As expected, none of the expired tax credits for small wind, fuel cells, and other "orphans" made it into the finished product. There's some chatter of moving an additional package before breaking for the holidays, but count ME as decidedly skeptical lawmakers will

find the energy for such a push.

Timeline on this: Senate Majority Whip [John Cornyn](#) expressed confidence the bill would pass his chamber this week "probably on Tuesday" during an appearance on ABC's "This Week." Pro Tax's Bernie Becker has [an excellent look](#) at how the bill's expected passage is the culmination of half a life's work for a large number of Washington tax insiders.

FINAL SPRINT TO THE HOLIDAYS! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Bracewell's Frank Maisano was first up to identify former Alabama Rep. Parker Griffith as the last sitting congressman to switch parties. For today: How many current senators are older than 80? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

SHUTDOWN WATCH: Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin isn't expecting a government shutdown at the end of this week, though he said during a Sunday appearance on "Fox News Sunday" he couldn't be sure, POLITICO's Martin Matishak [reports](#). "I can't rule it out, but I can't imagine it occurring," he said. Remember, facing a Friday deadline, lawmakers still aren't sure how much money they'll have to spend in fiscal year 2018 since they haven't reached a spending cap deal. POLITICO's Rachael Bade, Seung Min Kim and Jennifer Haberkorn look at the sticky situation facing the GOP this week [here](#).

Ahead of the deadline, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló [asked](#) congressional leaders to provide emergency assistance to his devastated island before they skip town for the holidays. "No governor should ever be put in the position of having to deny that hope in the aftermath of a catastrophic disaster due to the inaction of Congress," he said. Lawmakers from Florida and Texas have also been pushing aggressively for disaster relief in this stopgap spending package.

ICYMI: A White House document circulating among agencies and obtained by POLITICO is setting the stage for a solar trade war with China, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#). The administration appears to be preparing its messaging ahead of setting punitive tariffs on Chinese-made solar power equipment. The tariffs would increase the cost of solar power in the U.S. and could slow expansion of the energy source and eliminate installation jobs. But the White House paper suggests trade barriers may be necessary to foster domestic solar manufacturing, particularly for advanced solar technologies.

The document notes solar power demand in the U.S. and abroad is growing rapidly and argues "federal policies should ensure that the United States can benefit from this expansion." And it argues the administration should consider "the potential negative impact on U.S. energy security of increased reliance on imported energy technology," in carrying out an executive order on energy independence and in developing a response to the Section 201 trade case from the two domestic manufacturers. "China will likely expand its dominance to include advanced solar technologies," the paper says. "U.S. policy should be focused on creating competitive conditions for U.S. companies to thrive in the global marketplace, and compete against China and other solar players."

Suniva, one of the companies seeking the tariffs, issued a statement in response to the article:

"Suniva applauds the Trump Administration for championing American manufacturing in the face of cheating by China and its proxies who want to kill American jobs and make America dependent on China for its energy and security needs."

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. **

SOMETHING ELSE TO WATCH: President Donald Trump is expected to discuss his National Security Strategy today and his administration will remove climate change from the list of national security threats, The Federalist [reports](#). The Obama administration's Pentagon called climate change a "threat multiplier" and the former president [warned](#) back in 2015: "Climate change constitutes a serious threat to global security, an immediate risk to our national security, and, make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country." Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [told a Senate committee](#) back in January he didn't consider climate change an "imminent national security threat." According to excerpts, the new document will state: "Climate policies will continue to shape the global energy system... The United States will continue to advance an approach that balances energy security, economic development, and environmental protection."

UNDER SCRUTINY: A lawyer working with America Rising has been filing public records requests for EPA employees who have been critical of Administrator Scott Pruitt's leadership of the agency, the New York Times [reports](#). "This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Gary Morton, an agency employee in Philadelphia, said. That comes as a group associated with America Rising, Definers Public Affairs, has been hired by EPA for "media monitoring" services to track how the agency is being covered.

NYC PLANS 'PEOPLE'S HEARING' ON CLEAN POWER PLAN: After being snubbed by EPA for a public hearing on its plans to repeal the Clean Power Plan, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Friday they'll hold a "people's hearing" on the regulation Jan. 9 where they'll hear and compile testimony for the agency. Registration [here](#). ME readers no doubt remember Schneiderman is leading a group of states and localities defending the Obama-era regulation's legality.

DEPARTMENT OF BAD TIMING: Just a few days ahead of a Thursday vote on the future of Georgia Power's two new nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle, Hartfield-Jackson International Airport suffered an hours-long power failure that grounded thousands of travelers as the holiday travel season kicked into high gear, USA Today [reports](#).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! Today marks two years since Congress passed and then-President Barack Obama signed legislation that [lifted the crude oil export ban](#) as part of a broader package that also extended prized tax credits for the wind and solar industries.

GREENS SUE OVER EPA'S PLAN FOR TEXAS HAZE: Environmental groups on Friday

sued EPA over its federal plan to limit haze-causing pollution from Texas power plants. The rule has been supposed to have been in place by 2007, a delay that prompted a federal court to order a plan be finalized by either Texas or EPA by September. Without a submission from Texas, EPA was forced to finalize a federal version, but environmentalists complained that the Trump administration's plan was a "sham rule" that would not reduce pollution nearly as much as the Obama administration's proposal would have. In addition to a lawsuit in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, the groups also submitted a petition for reconsideration to EPA.

KEEP AN EYE OUT: Pro's Alex Guillén notes in Energy Regulation Watch that while the holidays tend to be a slower time for regulatory news, EPA told a federal court this week that its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for a replacement to the Clean Power Plan will publish "in the upcoming weeks." That notice, which OMB completed its review of on Thursday, sets the stage to replace the Obama-era rule.

PUBLISH THE RULE! Three senior House Energy and Commerce Democrats — Frank Pallone, Paul Tonko and Diana DeGette — aren't pleased by Pruitt's plan to gather more input on the agency's Lead and Copper Rule and urged him to immediately move ahead with a proposed rule. "Administrator Pruitt is hiding this delay behind the guise of a novel consultation process with the states, but the states need to see the proposed rule in order to provide relevant comments," they said in a statement. "The EPA previously pledged to publish a proposed rule to revise the Lead and Copper Rule this month, and therefore we call on Administrator Pruitt to publish the proposed rule immediately."

FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE: POLITICO New York's Keshia Clukey takes a look at how new SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson, a former official with the U.S. Department of Energy under the Obama administration, is proposing the use of 21st century innovation to help solve SUNY's fiscal and infrastructure problems. The benefits of making campuses more energy efficient are threefold, she told POLITICO. The lion's share of SUNY's energy use is attributed to its approximately 2,800 buildings — 2,346 of which are state-operated, including academic buildings, hospitals and residence halls. Upgrades could include weatherizing buildings, using more efficient heating and cooling techniques, or even adding solar panels. This helps the bottom line, saving campuses money, reducing operating costs and giving "local budget relief, which allows them and the presidents to do more for the academic mission, Johnson said. Read more here.

ANYBODY WANT IN? Republicans are struggling to find a top-tier candidate to challenge North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp even though she represents a state that was a solid win for Trump, the Associated Press reports. Perhaps the highest-profile potential challenger, Rep. Kevin Cramer, has been reticent about launching a bid even though the president strongly pushed him to run earlier this fall. "I'm not sure that our party fully grasps or understands the magnitude of a campaign against Heidi Heitkamp," former Republican Gov. Ed Schafer said.

PERDUE WRITES GRIJALVA ON GRAND CANYON MINING: Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue attempted to reassure House Natural Resources Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva in a letter that a recommendation from the administration to look into lifting a moratorium on uranium mining near the Grand Canyon was merely "for consideration" and did not represent a

federal action. But that didn't reassure Grijalva: "Opening up new uranium mines or allowing new claims to be filed in this region is a dead issue. Let's drop it and move on once and for all," he said in a statement.

SPOTTED: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and his wife, Lola, at Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday morning for the annual Wreaths Across America event. Picture [here](#).

QUICK HITS

— North Cascades grizzly bear recovery work halted by Interior Department. [The Missoulian](#).

— E.P.A. Contractor Has Spent Past Year Scouring the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials. [New York Times](#).

— More than \$600,000 spent on police gear for pipeline protest. [AP](#).

— Coal leases OKd, suit immediately follows. [Grand Junction Daily Sentinel](#).

— Clean coal plant in Wyoming slated for operation by summer. [AP](#).

— Cuba's Castro and Russian oil executive meet in Havana. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

3:30 p.m. — "[IEA's Coal 2017: Analysis and Forecasts to 2022](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — Senate Banking Committee [holds vote](#) on nominations including Scott Garrett's to run the Export-Import Bank, Dirksen 538

1:00 p.m. — Environmental and Energy Study Institute hosts a [briefing](#) about the takeaways from the latest global climate talks, Dirksen 562

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. — "[Freight Movement: Assessing Where We Are Now And Where We Need To Go](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump, was signed into law ten years ago this week. Thanks to

the RFS, consumers have greatly benefitted in the past decade, with cleaner air, lower gasoline prices and a boost to local economies. Recently, President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency finalized a strong RFS for next year that maintains the statutory 15 billion gallon requirement for conventional renewable fuels like corn ethanol. President Trump understands that consumers benefit when the RFS is implemented as Congress intended. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. #thankyouRFS **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/sizing-up-the-tax-bills-energy-provisions-054933>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Solar, wind get reprieve in final tax bill [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre | 12/15/2017 06:57 PM EDT

The [conference tax bill](#) released Friday by Congressional Republicans resolves a slew of issues faced by the energy industry.

— **Wind and solar credits saved:** The final tax bill, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), follows the Senate's bill when it comes to the production tax credit and the solar tax credit, meaning both are left untouched. The House bill had proposed reducing the value of the PTC and changing when a project qualified for it, and it had proposed dropping the permanent 10 percent credit for the ITC. Both credits will phase down as agreed to in a deal struck in 2015.

— **MLP benefits added:** It also includes language Sen. [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas) proposed that would give deductions to investors in master limited partnerships, the corporate structure for many pipeline companies.

— **EVs roll on:** A tax credit for electric vehicles was preserved.

— **Oil recovery restored:** Credits for abandoned oil wells and enhanced oil recovery that were eliminated in the House version were restored in the final bill.

— **Selling off the oil:** The bill retains the Senate language that would sell up to \$600 million in Strategic Petroleum Reserve oil to offset any shortfall from opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Senate language forecast drilling in ANWR would generate \$1 billion in revenue over 10 years, an estimate critics have said is too optimistic.

— **More revenue sharing:** The bill also temporarily lifts offshore Gulf of Mexico oil and gas production revenue sharing caps to \$650 million annually for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, up from a previous limit of \$500 million, to support coastal restoration and protection projects.

— **Base erosion eased for renewables:** Tax writers created some room to keep banks and other financiers of renewable projects in the game by allowing them to take 80 percent of the credits

for the PTC and the ITC.

— **No tax extenders:** Numerous senators have been saying it for weeks now, and the bill makes it official: None of the expired tax credits for small wind, fuel cells, and other "orphans" made it into the conference bill. The extension of the nuclear tax credit that was in the House bill has also been dropped.

— **Utilities still get to deduct interest:** The bill preserves provisions in both the House and Senate versions that allowed utilities to continue to deduct interest on loans without the limitation placed on other businesses.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Tax bill a dream come true for some GOP wonks [Back](#)

By Bernie Becker | 12/17/2017 06:58 AM EDT

For the large contingent of Washington supply-siders and tax-cutters, the sweeping tax overhaul that President Donald Trump is poised to sign into law this week has been a generation in coming — and the culmination of half a life's work that started during Ronald Reagan's 1980s.

Grover Norquist, arguably the best-known anti-tax activist in the country, started Americans for Tax Reform at then-President Reagan's request to help marshal support for the 1986 tax overhaul. He's been working ever since to rally support for more tax cuts.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) for years said his dream job was to be House Ways and Means chairman, a position that would have allowed him to quarterback the sort of tax revamp that his mentor, the late Jack Kemp, helped get through Congress in 1986.

When he became Speaker, Ryan said he was reluctantly passing the title of Ways and Means chairman, and the opportunity to focus attention on tax reform, to Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas).

Now, the 2017 tax revamp will bring the American tax system more into lockstep with those conservatives' thinking than perhaps ever before — making the idea that what works for corporate America will work for the country at large a central plank of U.S. policy for decades to come, maybe even a generation or more.

"This tax cut and reform will drive further reforms and reductions for the next 50 years," Norquist said Friday.

The corporate rate would be slashed from 35 percent to 21 percent under the GOP plan, which would also allow businesses to immediately write off investments for five years and scrap Obamacare's individual mandate. In an extra bonus for the right, it also shrinks the deduction for

state and local taxes, an incentive that mostly helps blue, high-tax states.

"This is a pretty historical moment for the conservative movement," said Stephen Moore, another of those supply-siders, who has over the years worked at the Club for Growth, The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal editorial page.

"I've been in this game for 30-some years. This, if it passes, will be the single biggest policy triumph for conservatives since the 1996 welfare reform. It's up there with the '81 Reagan tax cuts," added Moore, who's an informal adviser to the president and, along with fellow supply-sider Larry Kudlow, helped then-candidate Trump craft his tax plan.

The start of the conservative tax-cutting movement is frequently traced back to 1974, when a young economics professor named Arthur Laffer met an equally young Dick Cheney, then a top aide to President Gerald Ford, at a restaurant. Laffer doodled on a napkin the case that cutting taxes can increase revenues for the government, a theory now known as the Laffer Curve.

That case is maybe most famously argued by Kudlow, who worked in Reagan's White House and has spent more than 15 years defending its merits on CNBC. Perhaps even more importantly, Moore said, Kudlow worked overtime to pitch the GOP tax plan to skeptical Republicans like Sens. Susan Collins of Maine) and Bob Corker of Tennessee, both of whom now seem likely to back the measure.

It might be hard to imagine now, but the Republican Party hasn't always been dominated by would-be tax cutters. Former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) once joked that "the good news is that a bus full of supply-siders went off a cliff. The bad news is that two seats were empty," according to "Showdown at Gucci Gulch," the book about the 1986 tax overhaul.

But the supply-side theory eventually won out, if in fits and starts. Reagan's 1981 tax package cut the top individual rate from 70 percent to 50 percent — with the rate getting down all the way to 28 percent in 1986.

Republicans now credit those 1981 tax cuts with sparking years of economic growth, higher wages and job creation. But with the economy floundering in 1982, Dole and other Republicans pushed through a tax increase. And Democrats have long said that there was no trickle in the GOP's "trickle-down economics," pointing to a 1990s economic boom that happened after President Bill Clinton raised taxes.

Conservatives believe the growth had more to do with a cut in the capital gains rate under Clinton's watch, which itself was followed several years later by the two rounds of tax cuts under George W. Bush.

Now, 15 years later, all that work by supply-siders has culminated in a new kind of tax reform, which marries the theory that tax cuts for business will be a boon for the economy with tax reform's customary discarding of various tax incentives that have collected over the years and that they say distort the economy.

Marty Sullivan of Tax Analysts said the 2017 tax overhaul looks more like the 1981 and 2001 tax cuts enacted under Republican presidents, as opposed to tax overhauls in 1969, 1976 and 1986. The 1986 tax reform, while lowering the top corporate rate from 46 percent to 34 percent, actually hiked taxes on corporations to pay for tax relief for individuals, and to keep from adding to deficits.

"Those were all workman-like reforms where the staff and members looked hard for unfair and complicated tax breaks to take out of the code to simplify it, make it fair and reduce rates," said Sullivan, a former economist for both the Treasury Department and the Joint Committee on Taxation. "In this bill, tax cutting is the primary motivation and reform is an afterthought."

The next question is whether this bill will jolt the economy the way its supporters predict. Trump and other top Republicans have said that the economic growth created by the tax cuts will more than offset its current \$1.456 trillion price tag.

But while outside analysts and JCT have found that the Republican tax plan would create hundreds of billions of dollars in new revenue, none of them have found that the plan would come close to paying for itself. On top of that, Democrats are already making it clear that they'll do everything in their power to unwind this year's tax bill, especially if they win back some power in Washington next year.

"One of the lessons of '86 is it's really hard to get tax reform, but it's even harder to keep it," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former Congressional Budget Office director and president of the conservative American Action Forum. "I think it's a concern. The partisan nature makes it ripe for change the moment the Democrats get the opportunity."

For their part, conservatives say they're in better shape than ever to protect the new tax cuts. Republicans were united against former President Barack Obama's efforts to allow Bush-era rates for the wealthy expire, though they weren't successful in the end, and Norquist notes that bipartisan efforts that erased parts of the 1986 tax overhaul came before practically all GOP lawmakers were signing his organization's pledge against tax hikes.

But Moore also called the 2017 tax cuts a "riverboat gamble," echoing the late Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker's thoughts on the 1981 Reagan tax cuts. Their success or failure, Moore added, will have a big impact on whether the supply-siders' influence grows or diminishes over the next generation.

"We say it will work, and they say it won't and this will be put to the test," Moore said. "If this doesn't work, I'll eat some crow."

To view online [click here](#).

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Mnuchin won't 'rule out' a shutdown, but doesn't see one coming [Back](#)

By Martin Matishak | 12/17/2017 10:00 AM EDT

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin on Sunday wouldn't rule out the possibility of a federal government shutdown at the end of the week, but said he doesn't see one coming.

"I can't rule it out, but I can't imagine it occurring," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

"I would expect that both the House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats, understand if they can't agree on this they need to have another short-term extension to move this to January," Mnuchin added.

"We can't have a government shutdown in front of Christmas," he emphasized.

The government is set to run out of money Friday, unless Congress acts. Lawmakers are expected to take up a funding measure after they deal with the \$1 trillion-plus tax bill early in the week.

House GOP leaders have proposed a partisan funding bill that covers a full year of defense spending at \$640 billion but keeps the doors open at other federal agencies only until Jan. 19. Many of the provisions, however, likely won't pass muster in the Senate, adding to the time crunch.

Mnuchin declined to comment on what impact a shutdown might have on the U.S. economy, but said he "can't imagine sending government workers home for Christmas."

"I hope that Congress gets this done," he said.

The Treasury secretary also declined to weigh in on whether short-term funding bills is the right way to run the government.

"That's something we'll talk about more. ... Hopefully we'll look at reforms for different things next year," he said.

To view online [click here](#).

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GOP leaders in House, Senate endorse conflicting shutdown strategies [Back](#)

By Rachael Bade, Seung Min Kim and Jennifer Haberkorn | 12/17/2017 06:22 PM EDT

Republican leaders in both houses of Congress face a sticky situation this week as they try to avert a government shutdown: Each side has promised its members things that will not fly in the other chamber.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told moderate Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) he'd support passage of legislation by the end of the year to prop up Obamacare insurance markets — so long as she votes for tax reform. That addition, however, puts Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) in a pickle: His members are loath to be seen as bailing out a health care law they hate.

Ryan, meanwhile, green-lighted a short-term spending strategy that funds the Pentagon but does nothing for Democratic priorities — and suggested House members could leave town to try to "jam the Senate" into accepting their bill. But McConnell needs eight Democrats to pass anything, so the House plan is sure to fail in his chamber.

"Right now, they're just headed straight off a cliff," one person familiar with the negotiations said of the House. "[The] Senate's not likely to jump with them."

Instead of addressing the obvious inconsistencies, GOP leaders have tried to put off the issue and focus on tax reform for now. They're eager to delay internal spending fights until the tax package — which Republicans view as critical to maintaining their congressional majorities in the 2018 midterm elections — reaches the Oval Office for President Donald Trump's signature sometime this week.

"It's going to be a bipartisan [spending] deal; [some House Republicans] are going to be unhappy with that — and you don't want to have the tax issues as the place they decide to retaliate," said Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla), a member of the House appropriations panel, hinting at House GOP fears that conservatives could hijack tax reform to make a stand on spending issues.

But time is running out, and the GOP's tax-reform tunnel vision has left Republican leaders without a clear strategy for the spending legislation. All this is quietly raising concerns that the government could shut down after Friday, when, short of congressional action, federal coffers are set to dry up.

While Democrats have at times struggled to fend off GOP legislative efforts, this time they have leverage. Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi of California and Chuck Schumer of New York appear to have backed off immigration demands they initially wanted addressed by the new year, but they're still adamant that any boosts in defense money be matched by increases in domestic spending.

Leaders in both chambers hoped to strike a deal to raise strict spending caps for both by Friday. But the so-called Big Four — Ryan, Pelosi, McConnell and Schumer — have yet to agree on those numbers. The most likely outcome, some Republicans now say, is kicking everything into 2018: They predict another short-term funding bill, leaving a broader spending and immigration agreement until January.

There has been some progress on the immigration front, aides say. A bipartisan group of seven senators met multiple times last week to try and hammer out an immigration deal that combines legislation for Dreamers — hundreds of thousands of whom are losing their temporary work permits and deportation protections due to actions by Trump — with other immigration

enforcement measures.

The group includes Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin of Illinois and Michael Bennet of Colorado, and GOP Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Cory Gardner of Colorado and Thom Tillis of North Carolina. They want to be able to strike a deal on immigration they can subsequently present to their leadership.

It's unclear, however, whether Democrats will go along with pushing major issues into next year, upping the pressure on Republicans to come up with a funding proposal that can avert a shutdown.

First up this week is tax reform. House Republicans expect to pass the tax bill Tuesday morning, huddling for a rare Monday night conference to discuss the final package negotiated with Senate Republicans. After that, the Senate will take up the bill as the House sends them its "continuing resolution" through Jan. 19, which also includes Republicans' much-desired Pentagon funding boost.

The upper chamber is expected to amend the government funding bill and send it back to the House — which is where things could get ugly. Leadership sources in both chambers say the Senate version of the spending bill could include the bipartisan Obamacare stabilization effort, written by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.), to satisfy Collins.

The White House is expected to back that approach because the tax bill repeals another part of Obamacare that conservatives despise: the requirement that everyone carry health insurance.

It's unclear, however, whether even a Trump endorsement would make the Obamacare language on the spending bill palatable to House conservatives. House GOP leaders during a Thursday afternoon conference last week began running the idea by lawmakers — but it didn't go over well. Multiple Republicans encouraged leaders to continue with the "jam the Senate" strategy rather than accepting changes made by the other chamber. GOP leaders said they needed to make sure the conference gives them "flexibility" to negotiate with the Senate.

Privately, senior Republicans say any House plan to stick the Senate with a bill it can't pass would be political suicide. They worry it could lead to a shutdown — which could backfire in the November midterms.

Even more complications could still arise for the spending legislation. Anti-abortion groups with strong connections to House conservatives have said recently that if the bill includes the Obamacare subsidies patch, they want it to also include language barring federal funding for abortions. Senate Democrats, whose votes are needed for passage, would likely push back.

"Any Member voting for the Alexander-Murray proposal, or other Obamacare stabilization legislation not covered by the Hyde amendment, would not only be voting to sustain what many have called the largest expansion of abortion since *Roe v. Wade*, but would also be voting to directly appropriate taxpayer dollars for insurance that includes abortion," wrote Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, in a letter to lawmakers.

Beyond that, lawmakers also have to iron out several less-discussed policy matters that could wind up tied to the spending bill. One of those includes funding for a popular children's health insurance program whose funding has expired; another includes reauthorizing the government's surveillance authority.

A third has become more than a little contentious: a sorely needed disaster aid package for hurricane-ravaged areas in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We've been told time and time again by the speaker and the House leadership that the supplemental's going to be coming, but it never seems to come," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas), one of the loudest voices urging for more aid for his home state, said last week. "The can always seems to be kicked down the road. It's a source of more than a little frustration on my part and I think on the entire Texas delegation."

Nonetheless, Trump administration officials and senior Republican lawmakers are publicly confident that funding for the government won't dry up — particularly three days before Christmas. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin told "Fox News Sunday" that while he couldn't rule out the prospects of a government shutdown, "I can't imagine it occurring." And Senate GOP leaders, from McConnell on down, have been adamant that Congress will successfully avert one by the end of the week.

"I think we're determined that it's not going to happen, and it won't happen," Cornyn said late last week.

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U.S. setting stage for solar trade war with China [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 12/15/2017 05:13 PM EDT

An unreleased White House document offers the strongest hint yet that the Trump administration is laying the groundwork for punitive tariffs on Chinese-made solar power equipment — a step that would promote the president's "America First" trade agenda while sharply increasing the costs of solar power in the U.S.

The prospect of such tariffs, which President Donald Trump could announce in January, has deeply alarmed the U.S. solar installation industry. It warns that it could lose tens of thousands of jobs if the cost of solar spikes, slowing the booming growth that sun-powered energy enjoyed during the Obama administration.

But the White House is preparing to argue that trade barriers are needed to foster solar manufacturing inside the United States, something it calls important to both national security and

the economy, according to a document draft obtained by POLITICO. The paper argues that cheap solar imports allow China to unfairly profit from Americans' use of renewable power and gain influence in the developing world's energy infrastructure.

"While solar energy is forecast to play a larger role in the world's energy mix, other countries stand to benefit significantly more than U.S. workers," says the four-page paper, which is circulating within executive branch agencies for comment.

Trump has not said whether he intends to initiate the trade barriers on solar equipment imports, but he has accused China of "ripping off" the U.S. in international trade and called for the U.S. to become energy dominant by hiking production of oil, natural gas and coal. The new paper is likely to inspire a debate about whether the White House's rhetoric about creating U.S.-based solar manufacturing masks an effort to kneecap a growing, green alternative to fossil fuels such as coal — an energy source that Trump has repeatedly championed on the stump.

While the administration has touted an "all of the above" energy approach, it has instead taken significant steps to bolster fossil fuels, proposing measures to give financial support to coal-fired power plants even as it works to repeal the Obama administration's climate rules for the power industry. It has also pushed to grow U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas, and sent EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to Morocco this week to promote U.S. gas shipments.

Trump must decide by Jan. 26 whether to institute the tariffs that the U.S. International Trade Commission recommended last month, after two U.S. solar manufacturers, Suniva and SolarWorld Americas, filed complaints accusing Chinese competitors of undercutting them.

Suniva, which is majority owned by a Chinese investor and is in bankruptcy, and SolarWorld, whose German parent is also in bankruptcy, say the flood of solar cells and panels from factories across Asia that are owned by Chinese companies has driven prices too low for them to compete.

Suniva spokesman Mark Paustenbach welcomed the White House's approach.

"Suniva applauds the Trump Administration for championing American manufacturing in the face of cheating by China and its proxies who want to kill American jobs and make America dependent on China for its energy and security needs," he said in a statement Friday.

But the U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association has said the drop in solar panel prices has triggered a boom in sales across the U.S., and establishing high tariffs could eliminate more than a third of the 260,000 solar jobs in the United States. Solar energy prices have tumbled dramatically over the past decade, and large, utility-scale plants in the Southwest are cost-competitive with natural gas and coal-fired power plants now. The industry fears that tariffs would reverse those cost declines, dealing a blow to project developers just as federal incentives for solar power phase out over the next four years.

The companies suing have countered that they believe tariffs could result in a net increase in jobs across the solar industry.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative heard from both sides at a hearing earlier this month and will soon send its own report to the White House.

The White House also opposes incentives for renewable energy. The paper advises against the federal and state tax incentives and mandates that have helped fuel the growth of renewable power, saying they are "subsidized by U.S. taxpayers," and "become overseas job creation programs."

The new White House paper says the international solar sector, "including its supply chain and critical minerals requirements, will grow in importance from an economic and energy security perspective," and it cites estimates that the global solar market will expand to \$140 billion in 2023 from \$65 billion in 2015. Chinese companies hold about 80 percent of the solar manufacturing capacity, although the U.S. is the second-largest market for solar energy, the paper says. The U.S. has about 38,000 solar manufacturing jobs, and China has 1.5 million, it notes.

The document says that depending on foreign countries for energy technology imports also jeopardizes U.S. energy independence and dominance.

It suggests the U.S. could focus on advanced solar technologies, rather than current ones already dominated by other countries, but it doesn't offer any potential policies. Trump has announced a review of the nuclear power sector, and the White House document says that might be necessary for solar and other energy sectors.

The White House document claims China has used its "monopoly" to punish U.S. industries that are part of the global supply chain, including by imposing its own tariffs.

U.S. producers "could benefit from moves designed to undermine China's monopoly over much of the sector and generate competition, including steps to revitalize U.S. manufacturing," it says. "Yet questions remain about the scope and extent of those potential benefits, especially in the context of various policy options that, depending on the course chosen could backfire on the U.S. supply chain, while imposing minimal harm on Chinese state-owned enterprises."

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'Time is running out' to slow climate change, Obama tells Coast Guard grads [Back](#)

By Sarah Wheaton | 05/20/2015 01:25 PM EDT

President Barack Obama delivered a somber lecture on the science of climate change to the graduates of the United States Coast Guard Academy on Wednesday as argued that global warning poses a threat to national security.

Obama's call to cut carbon emissions, which emphasized the impact that Arctic ice melt would have on the Coast Guard, came just over a week after he opened Alaska's Arctic Coast to oil drilling — and about seven months ahead of a United Nations summit in Paris at which the president hopes to cement his legacy as a global leader on climate change.

"Climate change constitutes a serious threat to global security, an immediate risk to our national security, and, make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country. And so we need to act — and we need to act now," Obama told cadets at an outdoor ceremony in New London, Connecticut. "After all, isn't that the true hallmark of leadership?"

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Though he didn't name a political party or individual, Obama castigated "folks back in Washington who refuse to admit that climate change is real."

Or those, he added, "who will equivocate. They'll say, 'I'm not a scientist.' Well, I'm not either. But the best scientists in the world know that climate change is happening."

Obama cited a Pentagon's assessment that climate change is a "threat multiplier," telling cadets that they will be on the front lines in responding to an increase in climate refugees. He contended that the terrorist group Boko Haram took advantage of drought in Nigeria, and that famine was a factor underlying the civil unrest in Syria.

One of Congress's top climate skeptics, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), responded by calling Obama's threat assessment a "severe disconnect from reality."

In a statement that cited a litany of issues — including nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran, the military success of the militant groups known as the Islamic State and potential chemical weapons in Syria — Inhofe continued: "The president's repeated failure to understand the real threat to our national security and inability to develop a coherent national security strategy has put this nation at an unknown level of risk with consequences that will span over decades."

Outside of the dire warnings, Obama took on a jaunty tone with the graduates, peppering his speech with inside jokes and references to "Swab Summer," "Rodeo Buffing" — "that looks dangerous," he said, noting that he saw the video — and apparent high jinks committed in campus buildings.

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ADAM B. LERNER

"Which reminds me," he said, "in keeping with longstanding tradition, I hereby absolve all cadets serving restrictions for minor offenses."

But the majority of the speech was devoted to the challenges this generation of servicemembers will face, from budget cuts to shifting coastlines.

Obama also put special emphasis on a frigid region with potential to become a new global hot spot.

"We're witnessing the birth of a new ocean," Obama said, describing the effect of receding Arctic ice.

A White House report released Wednesday predicted that as "shorter shipping routes become more accessible and more profitable, increased ship traffic and human activity in the region will require that the United States be more prepared to respond to emergencies in this remote region."

Even as his administration warns about new dangers in the Arctic, his administration gave Shell the green light last week to drill for oil in the Arctic as part of its "all-of-the-above" energy strategy. The move infuriated environmental groups, who've tried to keep the Chukchi Sea off limits to the oil industry and fear a spill would be devastating to the ecosystem.

"The president has made it a real priority to deal with climate change — it's clearly part of the legacy he's building — and saying yes to drilling in the Arctic doesn't fit in that frame," said the Sierra Club's Lena Moffitt. "That's something they're going to have to reconcile."

POLITICO PRO

Full coverage of energy policy

In his speech, Obama emphasized his administration's efforts on the cleaner parts of his energy strategy, noting new standards to double the fuel efficiency of cars, strict new rules for coal-burning plants, and the military's experimentation with solar power and biofuels.

"Today we can be proud that our carbon pollution is near its lowest levels in almost two decades," Obama said, adding that he is committed to doubling the pace of cutting carbon emissions.

"There comes a point where the worst effects will be irreversible, and time is running out,"

Obama warned. "That's why I've committed the United States to leading the world on this challenge."

Obama is hoping to spearhead history's most sweeping agreement to curb carbon emissions at a climate conference in Paris in December which would set climate policy decades beyond his tenure.

"If you see storm clouds gathering or dangerous shoals ahead, you don't do nothing. You take action," Obama told the cadets. "Anything less would be dereliction of duty."

Meanwhile, the fate of one the most symbolic environmental issues of Obama's presidency remains open. Asked whether the administration had completed its assessment of the environmental impact of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, White House spokesman Eric Schultz replied: "That is a policy review that's underway at the State Department."

Elana Schor contributed to this report.

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Tillerson: Climate change isn't 'imminent national security threat' [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 01/11/2017 05:08 PM EDT

Rex Tillerson challenged assertions that climate change is a major national security threat, arguing that the science linking global warming to destabilizing events around the world isn't conclusive.

"I don't see it as the imminent national security threat that perhaps others do," Tillerson, President-elect Donald Trump's pick for secretary of State, said during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing today.

Asked about the contention by many military officials and scientists that climate change is exacerbating droughts and extreme weather that in turn leads to international tumult, Tillerson said, "The facts on the ground are indisputable in terms of what's happening in terms of drought, disease." But he added, "The science behind the clear connection is not conclusive."

Tillerson also said that the fact that we can't predict climate change with "precision ... doesn't mean we should do nothing."

The former Exxon Mobil CEO said he is opposed to pulling out of international climate talks in part because they give the United States a window into other countries' commitment to slashing emissions.

"I think we're better served by being at that table than leaving that table," Tillerson said.

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Congress approves spending deal lifting oil export ban [Back](#)

By Darren Goode | 12/18/2015 12:03 PM EDT

Congress sent a massive spending deal to the White House Friday that would lift the 40-year-old ban on crude oil exports while extending clean energy tax breaks and preserving President Barack Obama's ability to adhere to the commitments he made as part of the global climate deal reached in Paris this month.

The oil and renewable provisions negotiated as part of the \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill represent the most significant energy policy enacted in years, a compromise that delivered major wins to interests on either side of the ideological spectrum. The omnibus sailed through the House 316-113, with the winning votes split virtually evenly among the two parties. The omnibus was packaged with a \$680 billion tax cut package that passed the House Thursday, and the combined bill cleared the Senate, 65-33.

The compromise handed a major victory to Republicans and oil-state Democrats. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) was the first to call for an end to the Ford-era ban on crude exports early last year, and the campaign quickly accelerated amid falling prices and the impending end to sanctions on Iran's oil industry. But it remains to be seen whether the ban's end will have much immediate impact, amid a global supply glut that has left prices well under \$40 a barrel.

But Democrats gained a big haul in return. The deal [extends](#) and phases out the wind production tax credit until 2020, and phases down the solar investment tax credit until 2022. That should provide a [bridge](#) until the administration's Clean Power Plan takes hold to further boost demand for carbon-free power.

And notably, the bill contains no Republican riders targeting major elements of President Barack Obama's environmental and climate agenda and legacy. It leaves in place EPA greenhouse gas restrictions for power plants and [its Waters of the U.S. rule](#), as well as Interior Department rules on hydraulic fracturing and stream buffer zone controls, among other high-profile initiatives.

The bill also [does not block](#) the administration's ability contribute to the Green Climate Fund, the United Nations-run bank tasked with helping poor countries deal with the effects of climate change, to which Obama has pledged a total of \$3 billion.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi overcame objections from progressive Democrats to lifting the oil export ban, arguing that Republicans' "desperate thirst" to do so led them to give up clean energy provisions that would "eliminate around ten times more carbon pollution than the exports

of oil will add" and preserve the rest of the administration's climate agenda. In the end, just 18 House Democrats opposed the deal.

The lack of riders incensed some coal-state Republicans who said they were promised more by GOP leaders in a final deal. "I feel we were disregarded," said Rep. David McKinley (R-W.Va.), chair of the Congressional Coal Caucus, who voted against the spending deal.

House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) touted language directing Interior to consult with states on the stream buffer rule and an infusion of economic assistance to clean up abandoned coal mines, especially in Appalachia.

EPA funding would remain flat from last year around \$8.1 billion — which Republicans noted also was the lowest level of funding for the agency since 2008. The Interior Department would receive \$12 billion, more than \$1 billion above last year. The Energy Department would see funding increased across its accounts. And the Army Corps of Engineers would see its budget rise 10 percent.

The White House backed the measure, noting it was "largely free of new unrelated ideological riders" and praised the wind and solar tax incentives as "driving significant reductions in carbon pollution and other dangerous air pollutants and providing certainty for investments in clean energy."

Despite these wins, the overall deal was viewed as a convoluted mixed bag, leading the League of Conservation Voters to decline to include it in its annual scorecard. Groups linked to the Koch brothers, as well as to more liberal environmental groups both opposed the deal, representing dissatisfaction on both poles of the energy-politics divide.

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To: Jackie Toth[jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 7:15:35 PM
Subject: RE: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Jackie Toth [mailto:jackietoth@cqrollcall.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:59 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Inquiry re: Whitehouse/Harris letter on Definers

Hi all,

Can the EPA please comment on the inquiry from Whitehouse and Harris today with concerns over conflicts of interest in the no-bid contract with Definers Public Affairs? Can the agency be specific on what services the firm is providing for the agency? Will the EPA be responding by Thursday as requested?

Deadline is no later than 3:15pm today.

Thanks all,

Jackie

Jackie Toth

CQ Legal

Energy & Environment Reporter/Analyst

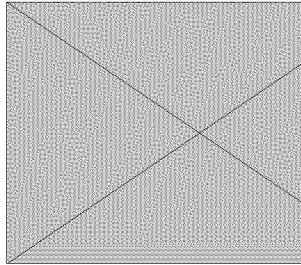
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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Cliff Sims
Sent: Wed 6/28/2017 8:20:47 PM
Subject: AFTERNOON COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING - June 28, 2017



AFTERNOON COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING

June 28, 2017

NEWS OF THE DAY

Enhanced Security Measures for All Flights to the United States

Top Line:

- The President's top priority is the safety and security of the American people.
- Terrorists continue to target commercial aviation, and their efforts have evolved into a "spider web" of threats, including innovative methods for attacking passenger aircraft.
- Now is the time to raise the baseline for global aviation security.
 - As the first step to achieving a worldwide standard, the Dept. of Homeland Security has announced new enhanced security requirements for all commercial flights to the United States.
 - These measures, both seen and unseen, include enhanced screening of passengers and electronic devices and heightened security standards for aircraft and airports.
- This is just the beginning. As threats continue to evolve, the U.S. and partners around the world will work together to improve intelligence sharing and standardize best practices, while also pursuing technological advancements that will make flying more secure for everyone.
- Air travel remains safe and secure, but we must stay ahead of terrorists by constantly adapting our security measures.

Background:

- Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly announced enhanced security screening measures for all commercial flights to the United States.
- The enhanced security measures include but are not limited to:
 - Enhancing overall passenger screening;
 - Conducting heightened screening of personal electronic devices;
 - Increasing security protocols around aircraft and in passenger areas; and
 - Deploying advanced technology, expanding canine screening, and establishing additional preclearance locations.

- These measures will affect both foreign and domestic carriers and will further secure flights from more than 280 last point of departure airports in 105 countries around the world.
- DHS will be approaching these enhancements in phases.
 - Some will be required immediately, while others will be implemented over time, in coordination with our international partners.
 - Stakeholders who fail to implement these requirements within certain timeframes may be subject to additional security restrictions, including a ban on large personal electronic devices on the aircraft or even suspension of flights to the United States.

NAFTA Hearings

- The Trump Administration continues to move forward in fulfilling its promise to renegotiate NAFTA to get a better deal for all Americans.
- During the current 90-day consultation period to determine negotiating objectives, the Trump Administration is hearing directly from the most important voices: the American people.
- Every person who submitted a request to testify has received the opportunity to testify.

POTUS SCHEDULE

- Tribal, State and Local Energy Roundtable
- Meet and Greet with World Series Champion Chicago Cubs
- Meeting with Immigration Crime Victims
- Remarks at Republican National Committee Dinner

ADDITIONAL NEWS OF THE DAY

Immigration Fact Sheet

"We are protecting the freedoms of law-abiding Americans, and we are going after the criminal gangs and cartels that prey on our innocent citizens." – President Donald J. Trump

TAKING ACTION TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: For too long, politicians across the country have failed to enforce the immigration laws already on the books.

- Just months in office, President Donald J. Trump is keeping his promises to the American people and taking action to enforce our country's immigration laws.
 - President Trump's policies have already had an impact, with 64 percent fewer apprehensions and inadmissible entries at the southwest border compared to the same time last year.
- In the first 100 days after President Trump signed Executive Orders on immigration enforcement, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has seen nearly 40 percent more Enforcement and Removal Operations compared to the same time last year.
 - Nearly 75 percent of these illegal immigrants have been convicted criminals with offenses ranging from homicide and assault to sexual abuse and drug-related charges.
 - Arrests of convicted criminal aliens climbed by nearly 20 percent this year compared to the same time last year.
- In fiscal year 2017, ICE has removed 2,798 gang members, compared to 2,057 gang members in all of fiscal year 2016.

- ICE has specifically targeted MS-13 gang members for removal on immigration violations.
- President Trump has acted to strengthen the country's ability to enforce the laws and stop illegal immigration at the border:
 - Directed the hiring of 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents and 10,000 ICE agents.
 - Ordered the construction of a wall on the southern border and prioritized funds in his budget to begin its construction.

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO ENFORCE OUR LAWS: President Trump is supporting legislation in Congress that begin to address sanctuary cities and immigrants that repeatedly enter the country illegally.

- President Trump supports the passage of the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act (H.R. 3003).
 - According to a recent Harvard-Harris poll, 80 percent of Americans support ending the practice of sanctuary cities that refuse to turn over criminal illegal immigrants to Federal authorities.
 - Under the bill, states and localities that refuse to follow Federal law and cooperate with Federal law enforcement will no longer receive certain grants from the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS).
 - Instead, states and localities that do cooperate will see grants shifted towards them.
 - The Secretary of Homeland Security can refuse to transfer illegal immigrants in DHS custody to authorities that refuse to cooperate with Federal immigration authorities.
- President Trump supports the passage of Kate's Law (H.R. 3004).
 - The law is named after 32-year-old Kate Steinle, who was gunned down in broad daylight by a 5-time deported criminal illegal immigrant with seven prior felony convictions.
 - The law would increase the mandatory penalties for illegal immigrants who re-enter the United States to up to two years in Federal prison.
 - Illegal immigrants who re-enter the United States are eligible to up to 25 years of Federal prison.
 - In his efforts to help the victims of these crimes, the President ordered the creation of the Department of Homeland Security's Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) office so the victims of illegal immigration would no longer be ignored.

A PROMISE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: While running for President, Donald Trump promised the American people he would bring back law and order to our broken immigration system.

- On August 31, 2016, Donald Trump said:
 - "We will end the sanctuary cities that have resulted in so many needless deaths. Cities that refuse to cooperate with federal authorities will not receive taxpayer dollars, and we will work with Congress to pass legislation to protect those jurisdictions that do assist federal authorities."
 - "Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws."
 - "Now is the time for all of us, as one country, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative, to band together to deliver justice and safety and security for all Americans."

No Sanctuary for Criminals Act (H.R. 3003)

Top Line:

- Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because politicians failed in their duty to enforce our immigration laws.
- During the campaign, the President vowed to end sanctuary cities that have resulted in so many needless deaths, and this bill is a major part of delivering on his promise.
- Eighty percent of Americans support this legislation – it unites us all, both Democrats and Republicans – and the President is looking forward to signing it into law.

Background:

- Sanctuary Cities are jurisdictions that refuse to turn over criminal aliens to federal authorities.
- This bill would prevent states and localities that refuse to follow federal law and cooperate with federal immigration authorities from receiving certain Department of Justice or Department of Homeland Security grants.
- It would shift those grant funds to states and localities that comply with federal law.
- It would also give the Secretary of Homeland Security the discretion to refuse to transfer aliens in DHS custody to states and localities that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

Kate's Law (H.R. 3004)

Top Line:

- Kate's Law is named for 32-year-old Kate Steinle, who was gunned down in broad daylight two years ago this Saturday by a 5-time deported criminal illegal alien with seven prior felony convictions.
- The Federal Government's first duty is to protect our citizens.
 - ☐ Sadly, Kate's story is far too common.
 - ☐ We must strengthen the penalties for aliens illegally re-entering our country, and this bill will do exactly that.
- This bill will further empower our great law enforcement agencies to keep violent gangs and criminal cartels, like MS-13, out of our communities.

Background:

- This bill would increase the mandatory penalties for aliens who illegally re-enter the United States, with stronger penalty increases for aliens who have been previously convicted of crimes.
 - ☐ Aliens who re-enter the United States after being deported can be imprisoned for up to two years in federal prison.
 - ☐ Previously-deported aliens with criminal records who re-enter the United States are eligible to serve federal prison sentences up to 25 years, depending on the nature of the prior conviction or convictions.

Trafficking in Persons Report

Top Line:

- Ending human trafficking is a major priority for the Trump Administration.

- Human trafficking is one of the most tragic human rights issues of our time. It splinters families, distorts global markets, undermines the rule of law, and spurs other transnational criminal activity.
- It threatens public safety and national security. But worst of all, the crime robs human beings of their freedom and their dignity. That's why we must pursue an end to the scourge of human trafficking.
- The White House has hosted roundtables and listening sessions with victims, NGO's, Members of Congress, and others to determine steps we can take to better execute a strategy to end human trafficking.
- The President signed an Executive Order designed to strengthen the enforcement of federal law with regard to transnational criminal organizations, including traffickers.
- He has also taken steps to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security personnel are properly trained to combat child trafficking at points of entry in to the United States.

Highlights from Ivanka Trump's Remarks at the State Department

- "Human trafficking is a pervasive human rights issue, affecting millions no matter their gender, age, or nationality. It is often a profoundly secret crime. One of the greatest challenges is merely to identify those trapped in modern slavery."
- "Even conservative estimates conclude that some 20 million people around the world – including right here in the United States – are trapped in Human Trafficking situations – terrible circumstances of exploitation, including so many young girls and boys who are the victims of the unthinkable tragedy of child sex trafficking."
- "Last month while in Rome, I had an opportunity to talk with human trafficking survivors. They told me of their harrowing stories. How they were trapped in this ugly, dark web. How they survived. how they escaped. And how they are slowly rebuilding their lives."
- "The survivors are not only victims, they are heroes. So are those courageous crusaders who have committed themselves to fight human trafficking wherever it exists."
- "As we mark the release of this year's report, let us remember the victims saved from the unimaginable horrors of human trafficking. Let us recommit ourselves to finding those still in the shadows of exploitation, and let us celebrate the heroes who continue to shine a light on the darkness of human trafficking."

Background:

- [Read the full report](#)
- The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is the U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.
- It is also the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government's commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.
- In the TIP Report, the Department of State places each country onto one of three tiers based on the extent of their governments' efforts to comply with the "[minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking](#)."

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To: john@cavalryllc.com[john@cavalryllc.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 3:04:26 PM
Subject: FW: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

From: U.S. EPA Media Relations [<mailto:no-replysubscriptions@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

May 12, 2017

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund sites, it was a successful week at EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned

by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009.”

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no ‘environmental savior.’ *“Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration’s attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama’s tenure.”*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *“Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. ‘What’s so great about that record,’ he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. ‘I don’t quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.’”*

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because ‘they exceeded their statutory authority.’ ‘They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.’”*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *“Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA’s failure to fix Flint’s water system.”*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors. *“The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I’m sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it’s the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board.”*

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama’s administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. *“Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on “cooperative federalism” and working with the states.”*

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. *“[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues.”*

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. *“Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota’s ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery.”*

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. *“‘If you go back to the inception of the agency...Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,’ EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. ‘The past administration simply disregarded that,’ he continued.”*

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. *“Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state’s relationship with that federal agency. ‘The days of coercive federalism are over,’ new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum.”*

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. *“Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president’s new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota.”*

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule.”*

Oklahoma City’s KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. *“The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... ‘Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump administration,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma’s attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump’s administration.”*

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If you would rather not receive future communications from Environmental Protection Agency, let us know by clicking [here](#).
Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460 United States

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 2/12/2018 10:17:48 PM
Subject: FW: Questions about EPA morale

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:30 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@schronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Here is another interview you can pull from.

●□□□□□□□□ <http://news3lv.com/news/local/epa-chief-scott-pruitt-goes-one-on-one-with-news-3>

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:27 PM
To: 'Fimrite, Peter' <PFimrite@schronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

In terms of these additional questions, we have addressed them in interviews with The New York Times and CBS News and you can pull your answers from them.

●□□□□□□□□ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/podcasts/the-daily/scott-pruitt-epa.html>

●□□□□□□□□ <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/scott-pruitt-talks-with-major-garrett-full-interview/>

There was a lot of work from various people to get you the answers to your questions. We look forward to reading your story!

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 4:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Any chance I could talk to Scott Pruitt? I need him to explain his philosophy, why he is doing what he is doing, ie: how the EPA had been weaponized in the past to choose winners and losers; how superfund sites have languished because of a lack of decision making; that climate change cannot be regulated because it was not part of the original mission; why it is important for him to streamline the agency. Even a statement from him or a series of quotes I could use along these lines would be helpful if he's not available.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 10:00 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

The answers with my names next to them are on the record. The tea leaves is not but let me see if I can get that approved. Does that work?

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: [@pfimrite](https://twitter.com/pfimrite)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 10:43:10 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: With tax vote looming little surety on government funding battle — Pruitt had his office swept for bugs — Reaction to EPA's push to replace Clean Power Plan

By Anthony Adragna | 12/19/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff and Emily Holden

DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN: Even as Congress prepares to green-light its massive tax package as soon as today, there's little clarity from senior leaders about how to pass a separate bill before Friday keeping the government open and even less about what's going to be inside it. There's a push to stick disaster aid in the package — Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) backed that Monday — as well an effort to extend a lifeline to clean energy "orphan" tax credits.

House lawmakers rolled out a \$81 billion disaster relief package to help states and territories still recovering from hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters. It includes \$12.1 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers for immediate repairs after these storms, as well as provisions to expedite projects meant to mitigate the impacts of future ones. For those playing along at home, that means Congress would have spent more than \$130 billion on severe weather this year, outpacing the total amount of aid after both Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and the request would be nearly double the \$44 billion ask from the White House this go round. "We have a commitment to our fellow citizens that are in the midst of major rebuilding efforts in all areas, including Texas, Florida, California, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands," Appropriations Chairman [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) said in a statement.

What other appropriators are reading: Forty Senate Democratic caucus members, led by [Ben Cardin](#), sent a letter to senior chamber leaders urging them to keep end-of-the-year spending legislation free of any environmental riders. If the group holds together, that's enough to uphold a filibuster on the underlying package. Read it [here](#).

Senate Democratic leader [Chuck Schumer](#) didn't sound optimistic Monday on the floor, noting unresolved issues include addressing mine workers pension funding and "adequate" disaster relief. And he slammed Texas Gov. Greg Abbott for requesting immediate federal aid while refusing to tap into the Lone Star state's rainy day fund in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey: "On its face, it's an absurd position for a routine critic of the federal government to take," Schumer said. "I for one don't want to vote a nickel for Texas unless they tap that rainy day fund."

More than 50 groups are out with [a letter](#) this morning urging Congress to tackle tax extenders before skipping town this year. That comes as more than 20 groups, including Alliance to Save Energy and National Association of State Energy Officials, asked senior lawmakers in [a letter](#) to extend several energy efficiency incentives that lapsed at the end of 2016. And six groups made [a similar pitch](#) for a retroactive, multi-year extension of the biodiesel tax incentive.

Most likely outcome? Via Budget & Appropriations Brief: 1. The House passes its partisan "defense-only" spending bill, with mostly Republicans. That bill is H.J. Res. 124 (115), but it is expected that today, its language will be attached by the Rules Committee to H.R. 1370 (115), which would then become the vehicle for the third continuing resolution. 2. The Senate strips out the extra Pentagon funding and adds a handful of riders. (Think "PAYGO" waiver, Alexander-Murray, FISA and maybe hurricane funding.) 3. The House eventually agrees to that bill, but on the backs of Democrats.

Speaking of that tax bill, the League of Conservation Voters sent a last-ditch letter urging members to oppose the conference report, H.R. 1 (115), raising particular alarm over language that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. "This provision is being included in an attempt to generate \$1 billion in government revenue to somehow justify the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy, but multiple analyses show that it is unlikely to raise anywhere close to even that miniscule amount," the letter states. Reminder of the energy-related provisions in the package here.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NRDC's Ed Chen was first to guess there are eight senators older than 80. For today: Same question, different chamber. How many House lawmakers are over 80? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

SOMEBODY'S WATCHING ME? EPA paid \$3,000 in March to have Administrator Scott Pruitt's office checked for surveillance bugs, according to an unnamed EPA source sharing documents with The Hill. The sweep, by New Jersey-based Edwin Steinmetz Associates, did not uncover any bugs. Shortly after that, EPA spent \$25,000 on a private phone booth for Pruitt's office late this summer.

PROBE SOUGHT IN EPA'S 'MEDIA MONITORING' CONTRACT: American Oversight and the Environmental Working Group have asked EPA's inspector general to investigate the agency's \$120,000 no-bid contract with a firm tied to Pruitt to track news coverage of its activities. "The EPA's decision to award a no-bid contract to a highly political organization with close ties to the current EPA Administrator, particularly combined with the fact that a related organization has been using the Freedom of Information Act to investigate the agency's employees, raises numerous questions about how the EPA is allocating its funds and whether it is complying with all government contracting, legal, and ethical requirement," they wrote. An employee of the group, Definers Public Affairs, has also filed dozens of public records requests for information on employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.

Meanwhile, Public Citizen asked GAO to find the contract was awarded improperly and recommend it be rescinded.

Won't back down: One of EPA's top unions, the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704, vowed not to be scared off by the tactics in a statement. "None of us got into this work to be voices of dissent," Nicole Cantello, an official with the union, said. "But in the face of grave injustice and the dangerous actions of the Trump administration, we have a

moral obligation to speak out and do everything within the bounds of the law that we can to fight back."

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. **

ON AN EMISSION: EPA will take comments on options for a proposal to replace to the Clean Power Plan, rather than openly questioning its authority on greenhouse gas emissions, Pro's Emily Holden reports. But any new rule is unlikely to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EPA is seeking feedback on ways for coal plants to run more efficiently, which could potentially raise some emissions if plants run more as result. A replacement could also take years to materialize.

Reactions abound: The Clean Air Task Force notes that the George W. Bush administration issued a similar advance notice of proposed rulemaking on the same question and never followed up. (See POLITICO's U.S. climate change timeline.) "The Obama EPA has already engaged in this exercise, beginning nearly seven years ago with listening sessions and a full rulemaking effort with a robust and voluminous supporting record," CATF said in an emailed statement, adding that the Trump administration's own analysis found the rule would have prevented as many as 4,500 premature deaths each year by 2030. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which represents many coal-reliant co-ops, praised EPA's move.

CONFIRMATION WATCH: The Senate Banking Committee convenes at 10 a.m. today to vote on a host of nominations. But all eyes will be on the fate of former Rep. Scott Garrett's selection to run the Export-Import Bank. Remember Sen. Mike Rounds came out against his nomination last week, which could sink Garrett in the closely divided committee. South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott is also likely a "no" on the nomination, McClatchy DC reports.

Boring but important: The Senate Rules Committee gathers today at 2:30 p.m. to hear testimony on a resolution, S. Res. 355 (115), from Sen. James Lankford. Among other things, the bill would lower the amount of procedural time that could be burned on most lower-level nominees from 30 to eight hours. The time for considering Supreme Court, circuit court and Cabinet-level nominees would remain unchanged. It would also lower the initial procedural requirement for beginning debate on legislation from 60 to 51 votes, while keeping in place the 60 vote threshold for final passage.

CHALLENGED: The New York Times sued the Interior Department on Monday for communications with Secretary Ryan Zinke concerning Bears Ears National Monument. Read it here.

MAIL CALL! MAJOR WORK NEEDED ON REUSE PROGRAM: More than a dozen public health and environmental groups sent a letter to Pruitt urging him not to revive a coal ash reuse promotional program "unless and until significant changes are made to the program." They

further ask the agency to evaluate existing "structural fill and beneficial reuse sites" to assess their impacts on human health and the environment. "EPA, or any other federal agency, must not promote coal ash reuse unless the safety of those practices has been fully evaluated and EPA has published peer-reviewed findings concluding that the specific reuses are safe for human health and the environment," the letter says.

TOSSING OUT SOME TWEAKS: The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners sent [a letter](#) outlining a series of suggestions for revamping the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act. "FERC already has the statutory authority to enact comprehensive reforms of PURPA's implementing regulations, and it would be an enormous missed opportunity if FERC enacted only small changes to them," Travis Kavulla, past president of NARUC, said in a statement.

FAA TO DRONES: BUZZ OFF OUR NUCLEAR SITES: Drones must stay at least 400 feet from seven key DOE facilities, the FAA said Monday. The move marks the first time the FAA has restricted DOE sites from drones. ME knows there will be more than a few folks receiving nicely gift-wrapped drones soon, so here's the [map](#) of where not to go. Mostly you would do well to stay away from national labs and nuclear waste sites.

'UNACCEPTABLE' CLIMATE REMOVAL: GOP Rep. [Carlos Curbelo](#) slammed Trump's decision Monday to remove climate change as a national security risk from his strategy document and urged Congress to step up instead. "Congress needs to take action to ensure our military installations around the world are adapting and mitigating when it comes to climate change, and I challenge the Members of the Climate Solutions Caucus to step up to help lead that effort," the Florida Republican said. Curbelo didn't offer any specific policy ideas for doing so.

STAFFING UP: Tesla has added Holland & Knight to its roster of Washington lobbyists. Former Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-N.Y.) and three of his colleagues have been lobbying for Tesla on the GOP tax bill, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), and "solar tariffs" since Nov. 1, according to a disclosure (h/t POLITICO Influence).

CHEEKY: The Sierra Club is sending a Christmas card to 17,000 families in Oklahoma highlighting what they say are Pruitt's actions to weaken environmental protections. Check it out [here](#).

MOVER, SHAKER: Bud Albright, a longtime energy sector veteran, is launching his own firm, Albright Strategies, in January. "I plan to focus on my strengths in matters before the Energy and Commerce Committee, issues of oversight and crisis management, and all matters energy, telecom, health care, and environment related," he emails. Albright's previously been an undersecretary at DOE and former staff director of E&C, among many other stops.

QUICK HITS

— US shale oil drillers set to kick off the new year with big production gains. [CNBC](#).

— Climate change hits Winter Olympic preparation. [Salt Lake Tribune](#).

- Canada oil producers exhaust options as pipelines, railroads fill. [Reuters](#).
- The coastal mortgage time bomb. [Inman](#).
- Public hearing Tuesday on natural gas pipeline that would cross the Potomac. [Washington Post](#).
- Lin-Manuel Miranda petition urges government to aid Puerto Rico. [The Hill](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

10:00 a.m. — Senate Banking Committee [holds vote](#) on nominations including Scott Garrett's to run the Export-Import Bank, Dirksen 538

1:00 p.m. — Environmental and Energy Study Institute hosts a [briefing](#) about the takeaways from the latest global climate talks, Dirksen 562

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, **helping to save consumers money at the pump**, was signed into law ten years ago this week. The RFS saved consumers \$17.8 billion in gasoline expenses in 2015, the equivalent to \$142 per American household, according to a recent analysis in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Gasoline prices were 18 cents per gallon, or 9.5% lower, because of the RFS. In addition, the RFS has been responsible for increased federal tax revenues. Learn more at www.ethanolrfa.org. #thankyouRFS **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/with-tax-vote-looming-little-surety-on-government-funding-battle-056676>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Solar, wind get reprieve in final tax bill [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre | 12/15/2017 06:57 PM EDT

The [conference tax bill](#) released Friday by Congressional Republicans resolves a slew of issues faced by the energy industry.

— **Wind and solar credits saved:** The final tax bill, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), follows the Senate's bill when it comes to the production tax credit and the solar tax credit, meaning both are left untouched. The House bill had proposed reducing the value of the PTC and changing when a project qualified for it, and it had proposed dropping the permanent 10 percent credit for the ITC. Both credits will phase down as agreed to in a deal struck in 2015.

— **MLP benefits added:** It also includes language Sen. [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas) proposed that would give deductions to investors in master limited partnerships, the corporate structure for many pipeline companies.

— **EVs roll on:** A tax credit for electric vehicles was preserved.

— **Oil recovery restored:** Credits for abandoned oil wells and enhanced oil recovery that were eliminated in the House version were restored in the final bill.

— **Selling off the oil:** The bill retains the Senate language that would sell up to \$600 million in Strategic Petroleum Reserve oil to offset any shortfall from opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Senate language forecast drilling in ANWR would generate \$1 billion in revenue over 10 years, an estimate critics have said is too optimistic.

— **More revenue sharing:** The bill also temporarily lifts offshore Gulf of Mexico oil and gas production revenue sharing caps to \$650 million annually for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, up from a previous limit of \$500 million, to support coastal restoration and protection projects.

— **Base erosion eased for renewables:** Tax writers created some room to keep banks and other financiers of renewable projects in the game by allowing them to take 80 percent of the credits for the PTC and the ITC.

— **No tax extenders:** Numerous senators have been saying it for weeks now, and the bill makes it official: None of the expired tax credits for small wind, fuel cells, and other "orphans" made it into the conference bill. The extension of the nuclear tax credit that was in the House bill has also been dropped.

— **Utilities still get to deduct interest:** The bill preserves provisions in both the House and Senate versions that allowed utilities to continue to deduct interest on loans without the limitation placed on other businesses.

To view online [click here](#).

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EPA to kick off rewrite of Clean Power Plan [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 12/18/2017 02:56 PM EDT

EPA is launching a process to consider proposing a new rule to replace the Clean Power Plan, according to a regulatory [document](#) released today, a move that goes further than a previous draft that sought to determine whether the agency had the power to regulate greenhouse gases at all.

The new document, which the agency is expected to release soon, acknowledges that the

Supreme Court ruled that the agency has authority to regulate greenhouse gases and that the agency found that those emissions harm human health, requiring it conduct a rulemaking. It also notes that EPA did not issue a separate endangerment finding for power plants, and instead relied on one it issued for motor vehicles.

EPA argues in the new document that if the agency writes a new rule, it can only apply to coal-fired power plants, not to the broader power system, as the Clean Power Plan did.

The agency is primarily focused on opportunities for power plant efficiency improvements, it said.

The notice lists examples of those possible upgrades.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will take comment on the notice for 60 days after it's published in the Federal Register.

To view online [click here](#).

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The long road to an international climate deal [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 11/07/2017 05:02 AM EDT

It's been 25 years since the landmark U.N. summit that set the world on a path to climate agreements in Kyoto and Paris. And more than a decade has passed since the Supreme Court first ruled that the EPA can regulate greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump administration is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and revoking Obama-era rules to limit those emissions from power plants, reversing decades of momentum behind policies to address the causes of climate change.

Let's take a look:

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Trump Ex-Im Bank nominee will likely be blocked [Back](#)

By Zachary Warmbrodt | 12/12/2017 04:20 PM EDT

Scott Garrett, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Export-Import Bank, will likely be blocked by bipartisan opposition after he struggled to convince lawmakers that he should run an agency he once tried to kill in Congress.

Garrett's fate was all but sealed Tuesday when Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) said he would oppose the former congressman's confirmation when it comes up for a vote at the Senate Banking Committee on Dec. 19. The panel has 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats, and all the Democrats are expected to oppose Garrett.

"I believe him to be a proponent of the abolition of the bank rather than a reformer of the bank," Rounds told POLITICO. "I'm looking for reformers, not abolitionists."

Rounds had raised concerns that small contractors in his state could be hurt if their larger customers lost access to financing. U.S. companies rely on the agency to provide loan guarantees to the foreign buyers of American exports.

If Garrett's nomination were blocked or withdrawn, it would be a major victory for companies and manufacturing groups, including Boeing and the National Association of Manufacturers. They have fought to stop his Senate confirmation based on his record of trying to shut down the bank while serving in Congress.

Before losing reelection in his New Jersey district last year, Garrett said the bank "embodies the corruption of the free enterprise system." As he tried to save his nomination in recent months, he struck a less aggressive tone and pledged publicly to keep the bank running.

Garrett's attempts to shore up support fell flat, and opposition to his nomination could grow before next Tuesday's vote.

Other Republicans on the committee said they had not yet made up their minds.

Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.), whose vote is one of the most closely watched on the panel, represents a state that's home to plants operated by Boeing and GE, two of the bank's most prominent beneficiaries. He has raised concerns with Garrett's record but has not announced how he would vote.

"My attention's all on the tax reform package," Scott said in an interview today. "I'm sure I'll have enough time before Tuesday to come to a decision."

Asked if Garrett will drop out or if the White House is looking for a new nominee, an administration official told POLITICO, "We plan on having a vote."

The administration has warned for months that if Garrett failed to advance then GOP lawmakers critical of the bank would hold up the confirmation of other nominees to head the agency. Sens. Pat Toomey (R-Penn.) and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) have threatened to derail other Ex-Im appointees if Garrett were not cleared.

Four less controversial nominees for the bank's board are also scheduled for a committee vote on Dec. 19, and they're expected to move forward. Their confirmation would help the bank's board regain a quorum that's needed to approve transactions worth more than \$10 million.

Shelby said on Tuesday that if Garrett were blocked, "a lot of us will probably vote against all of them," but he conceded that "we're probably outliers — the minority."

In an interview Friday, White House director of legislative affairs Marc Short declined to say what the administration would do if Garrett fell short of the necessary votes in committee.

"There are some who look at it myopically and will say, 'Here's your challenge in committee,'" Short said. "But I think focusing on the committee in and of itself doesn't factor in other members of Congress who will oppose a different nominee."

Underscoring the wedge that the Export-Import Bank has driven between Republicans, manufacturers on Tuesday applauded Rounds for announcing his opposition, while conservative groups went on the attack.

"Sen. Rounds is placing special interests and lobbyists above the interests of the American people," Club for Growth President David McIntosh said. "A vote against Scott Garrett is a vote for business as usual in Washington. Rounds' opposition will serve to protect the swamp and its creatures rather drain it."

Andrew Restuccia contributed to this report.

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 8:45:54 PM
Subject: RE: GOP firm ends controversial media monitoring contract with EPA

\$87,000 cheaper than the previous firm.

John Kerry's CoS called a few outlets this weekend (at his own request) telling reporters, wish we would've figured this out while we were at State, because Bulletin News is awful.

Apologize for the headache.

From: Jackson, Ryan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 3:36 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: GOP firm ends controversial media monitoring contract with EPA

Why this makes it appear wrong when it's not? I guess we have to get crappy Obama Administration service still?

From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard [<mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 2:24 PM
To: Jackson, Ryan <jackson.ryan@epa.gov>
Subject: GOP firm ends controversial media monitoring contract with EPA

By Emily Holden

12/19/2017 02:22 PM EDT

The Republican media monitoring firm Definers Public Affairs canceled its \$120,000 contract with EPA following a media backlash because of the company's links to GOP opposition

research firm America Rising.

Earlier this year, America Rising filed several Freedom Of Information Act requests for communications from EPA career staffers who had been critical of Administrator Scott Pruitt or President Donald Trump. That included email sent by John O'Grady, a top union official at the EPA, that "mentions or refers to President Trump."

News reports about the two efforts to monitor news coverage about the agency and dig up information about dissenting staffers stirred new accusations that Pruitt is fostering an atmosphere of paranoia and distrust at EPA.

Definers described the decision to end the contract as mutual, although EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox would not say whether the agency or company initiated the cancellation.

Definers President Joe Pounder said in a written statement that previous administrations paid for more for slower services, but "it's become clear this will become a distraction. As a result, Definers and the EPA have decided to forgo the contract." He added that the firm will not offer its services to any other federal agencies.

Mother Jones first reported on the contract, and The New York Times documented the ties between Definers and America Rising, which was also started by Pounder.

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/gop-firm-ends-controversial-media-monitoring-contract-with-epa-295918>

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 10:24:27 AM
Subject: Morning Media: Trump's 'tactical advantage' — NYT's 'battle for the soul' — MSNBC's newest conservative

By Joe Pompeo | 06/29/2017 06:22 AM EDT

With Cristiano Lima, Hadas Gold and Alex Weprin

DISPATCH FROM THE TRENCHES - Hadas Gold reporting : "Donald Trump and his allies believe he's gained a tactical advantage in his war with the media. As he escalates his attacks on the 'failing media,' Trump and his allies are increasingly convinced that recent evidence, including the retracted CNN piece on an aspect of the Russia investigations, will prove to skeptical voters that the mainstream media has a vendetta against the administration. Many White House staffers were 'elated,' a person with knowledge of their conversations said, when they learned that three journalists had resigned over a botched story that claimed newly appointed Export-Import bank official Anthony Scaramucci was being investigated for his ties to a Russian investment fund. Trump was quick to publicize the retraction and resignations on his Twitter feed. ...

"Conservative outlets and allies of the president also trumpeted Sarah Palin's libel suit against The New York Times for suggesting in an editorial that her super PAC played a role in inciting the gunman who shot former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. ... The attacks marked an escalation of Trump's strategy of citing media bias to rally conservatives and undecided voters around the idea that the investigations of Russian influence in the 2016 election are media-driven and politically motivated." More: "Trump seizes the advantage in war with media"

MEANWHILE, AT THE WHITE HOUSE - Yesterday's briefing was another off-camera affair, to the ongoing frustration of much of the media community. And then there was this: After initially saying Trump's remarks at an RNC fundraiser at the Trump Hotel in Washington would be closed to press, the White House then changed gears and said the press pool would be allowed into the event to cover the president's remarks. Then they backtracked and changed their minds yet again. Another day in paradise!

TIPS AND COMMENTS: jpompeo@politico.com / [@joepompeo](https://twitter.com/joepompeo). **Morning Media** is edited by **Alex Weprin** ([@alexweprin](https://twitter.com/alexweprin) / aweprin@politico.com) and produced with writing/reporting help from **Cristiano Lima**. (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](https://twitter.com/ludacristiano)). **Hadas Gold** contributed to today's newsletter. [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

IS ADVERTISING GETTING A LITTLE TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSROOM? That's the theme of a big CJR piece by former long-serving Times investigative reporter Jeff Gerth : "[A] bevy of new initiatives being rolled out to buoy the company's bottom line worry journalists at a paper that has long maintained a firm separation between its news and business operations. Continuing job cuts in the newsroom, even as the business side of the paper continues to grow, have made those tensions even more acute. ... One [Times journalist] described the mix of marketing and journalism ... as part of a 'battle for the

soul of the institution' pitting 'access journalism' against accountability reporting."

If that's not enough to get you to click, read it for the dishy anecdotes laying out clashes between Jill Abramson and Mark Thompson/Dean Baquet, each of whom went on the record: "In the digital age, The New York Times treads an increasingly slippery path between news and advertising"

NYT COPY EDITORS' NOTE TO NEWSROOM MANAGERS DEAN BAQUET AND JOE KAHN: "We have begun the humiliating process of justifying our continued presence at The New York Times. ... [W]e have a simple request. Cutting us down to 50 to 55 editors from more than 100, and expecting the same level of quality in the report, is dumbfoundingly unrealistic. Work with us on a new number. ... After we were compared to dogs urinating on fire hydrants when we edited stories ... we are finding it difficult to feel respected. ... You may have heard that the elimination of the copy desk is widely seen as a disaster in the making ... But you have decided to press forward anyway ... You often speak about the importance of engaging readers ... Dean and Joe: We are your readers, and you have turned your backs on us." Poynter has the full letter.

MUST READS:

- "Tillerson blows up at top White House aide" [POLITICO]
- "Trump's America; A special report on a divided country" [The Economist]
- "A Definitive Guide to the G.O.P. Insiders Enabling Donald Trump" [Vanity Fair]
- "Greetings, E.T. (Please Don't Murder Us.)" [NYT Mag]

SO THE LONG-RUMORED JASON CHAFFETZ/FOX NEWS DEAL IS A FAIT ACCOMPLI. What will the soon-to-be former Republican congressman -- who's complained about how hard it is to afford college tuition, a mortgage and a pad in D.C. -- be banking as the network's newest contributor? Sources familiar with contracts like these told us that a payday in the \$200,000 range wouldn't strain credulity, and that he's probably getting a studio built into his Utah home like many famous cable news commentators before him. (A Fox News spokesperson didn't respond to our queries.) Chaffetz starts July 1, and will "offer political analysis across FNC and FOX Business Network's daytime and primetime programming," per the announcement.

THE DAILY RETRACTION - Not to be outdone by CNN, Vice Media's tech-oriented Motherboard website retracted two stories alleging turmoil at Disney Parks over the presence of Donald Trump's animatronic robot at their Hall of President attraction. Citing "factual errors" and questions about sourcing, Motherboard replaced the two pieces with a note explaining: "We are conducting a full editorial review to pinpoint how this source was vetted, and how these stories were approved and published in violation of our usual editorial workflow. We fell short of our standards, and regret the error." Variety has more.

THE DAILY VIDEO PIVOT - via [Variety](#) : "MTV News is being restructured with an eye toward creating more video and short-form content for a younger audience ... The transition will see resources shift from long-form journalism to the development of short-form video pieces. Among the most significant changes -- MTV has reached an agreement with the Writers Guild of America East to represent MTV News staff members. As part of that agreement, MTV News is parting ways with fewer than a dozen staffers and several freelancers. The news division is in the process of hiring additional personnel to focus on video and short-form content."

SOUND BITES:

-- "There must be nights when Sean Spicer springs awake covered with fear sweat like Frank Sinatra in *The Manchurian Candidate*, wondering how this all happened." [[James Wolcott](#)]

-- "Sean Hannity, bless his heart, has the zeal of the late Trump convert. He would endorse communism if Trump decided to implement the policies of 'The Communist Manifesto.'" [[Ann Coulter](#)]

-- "If only journalists in the briefing room had pocket sized cameras capable of shooting video and connecting to the internet." [[Matthew Yglesias](#)]

-- "many media tombstones will soon read 'here lies x, he shifted to video'" [[Leah Finnegan](#)]

REVOLVING DOOR:

-- **Bret Stephens**, the conservative commentator, Trump scourge and former Wall Street Journal columnist, whose recent addition to The New York Times' opinion pages was like nails on a chalkboard for many liberal readers, is adding an MSNBC contributorship to his resume. [Kelsey Sutton has the details over at Mic](#): "Stevens joins another stable of new contributors and hosts recently hired by the network, which has been on something of a conservative hiring spree."

-- **Freelance features-writer extraordinaire Taffy Brodesser-Akner** is [joining The New York Times in a full-time capacity](#). After contributing to the Times Magazine for the past five years, she will now have a slot on the masthead as a staff writer. Additionally, Brodesser-Akner will write for the newspaper's Culture pages.

-- **Newest contributing editors at The Atlantic**: Foreign policy experts Kori Schake and Amy Zegart, who will cover national security and international affairs.

SOUNDTRACK: Echo & the Bunnymen, "[Heaven Up Here](#)"

EXTRAS:

-- In which Katie Couric asks Gerry Baker for his thoughts on Trump as a liar. [[The Atlantic](#)]

--ABC has settled its "Pink Slime" lawsuit, no word on how much money it will cost the company yet. [[CNN](#)]

-- Matt Bai co-wrote the screenplay to a forthcoming Jason Reitman joint starring Hugh Jackman, based on Bai's book about Gary Hart's rise and fall in the 1988 presidential sweepstakes. [[THR](#)]

-- CBS will air a primetime documentary series based on its streaming online news channel, CBSN [[The Los Angeles Times](#)]

-- "Publishers are piling into Instagram video." [[Digiday](#)]

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/06/29/trumps-tactical-advantage-nyts-battle-for-the-soul-msnbcs-newest-conservative-001301>

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]
From: Konkus, John
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 9:45:39 PM
Subject: WH Report
Daily Communications Report 12 18 17.docx

Team: Attached is today's report. I will send it to the WH around 6pm. Thanks.

John Konkus

Environmental Protection Agency

Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Mobile: (202) 365-9250

Daily Communications Report: EPA

TO: White House Cabinet Affairs Communications

FR: EPA Office of Public Affairs

DT: **Monday, December 18, 2017**

Upcoming

- EPA to release Draft Risk Assessments for Glyphosate – listserv posting likely today 12/18
EPA is releasing for public comment the draft human health and ecological risk assessments for glyphosate, one of the most widely used agricultural pesticides in the United States. Glyphosate is used on over 200 crops. Both draft risk assessments are very comprehensive.
- Superfund Site 2017 NPL Deletions - week of 12/18 - press release -- regional amplification - SFTF connection

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recorded significant improvement in 2017 in completing the final step in the Superfund process by deleting all or parts of seven Superfund sites from the National Priorities List (NPL).

Inquiries

African American Career World magazine (Katie McKy) – Profile of African American employee who loves his/her work.

Argus (Chris Knight) — Unified agenda on GHG program for vehicles.

Associated Press (John Flesher) – Confirmation that Cathy Stepp will be named new Region 5 Administrator.

Bloomberg Environment (Pat Rizzuto) – Asbestos information from industry groups.

Bloomberg Environment (Jennifer Lu) – Timeframe for issuing 120 day letters for ozone designations.

CBS Digital (Katie Watson); CNN (Rene Marsh); New York Times (Lisa Friedman) – Press clippings contract with Definers.

Climate Observatory and Oeco (Claudio Angelo) –Nature magazine profile of Administrator.

CQ Roll Call (Jackie Toth) – Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee Meeting.

E&E News (Sean Reilly); Houston Public Media (Travis Bubenik) – Texas haze plan lawsuit.

Inside Climate News (Marianne Lavelle) – Regulatory/deregulatory actions and ozone.

Inside EPA (Stuart Parker) – Ozone Co-operative Compliance Task Force.

Law 360 (Christine Powell) – Comments on Clean Water Rule

NBC National News (Suzy Khimm) – Lead and copper rule.

POLITICO (Christine Haughney) – Neonics assessments.

POLITICO (Emily Holden) – Confirming retirement of Steve Page and Peter Tsirigotis as new OAQPS lead.

Spectrum News Network (Silvia Gambardella) – Regulation of chemicals.

Vermont Digger (Mike Polhamus) – Clean air lawsuit.

VICE News (Alex Lubben) – Flooding at EPA.

Wall Street Journal (Tim Puko) – Dr. Michael Dourson's role with EPA.

Top Stories

The Hill: Returning Reagan-era Principles to the EPA: <http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/365450-returning-to-reagan-era-principles-to-the-epa>

Politico: EPA to kick off rewrite of Clean Power Plan:

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/12/epa-to-kick-off-rewrite-of-clean-power-plan-236869>

EPA released its Advanced Notice of Public Rulemaking to Limit GHG at Power Plants:

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/12/18/stories/1060069329>

Top Issues and Accomplishments

EPA ordered potentially responsible parties to clean up USS Lead Superfund site in East Chicago, Ind.:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-orders-potentially-responsible-parties-clean-uss-lead-superfund-site-east-chicago>

EPA awarded a grant to support a mobile asthma clinic for children in Oakland, Calif:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/us-epa-grant-supports-mobile-asthma-clinic-east-bay-children>

EPA releases an update on agency actions in response to Hurricane Maria:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-hurricane-maria-update>

And the same in Spanish language: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/actualizacion-de-la-epa-sobre-el-huracan-maria>

To: levi.bachmeier@gmail.com[levi.bachmeier@gmail.com];
robbie.lauf@gmail.com[robbie.lauf@gmail.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 5/12/2017 3:06:01 PM
Subject: FW: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

Some good North Dakota stuff is in here.

From: U.S. EPA Media Relations [<mailto:no-replysubscriptions@epa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA's Weekly Round-Up

EPA's Weekly Round-Up

May 12, 2017

From meeting with Florida Governor Rick Scott, signing a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage and reaffirming his commitment to cleaning-up Superfund sites, it was a successful week at EPA. Below is a recap of all of the good news from an EPA that is protecting the environment and American jobs.

National Stories ...

The New York Times reports one of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's top priorities is to clean up toxic Superfund sites. *"Scott Pruitt has directed his regional chiefs to elevate Superfund cleanup efforts to what he describes as their rightful place as the agency's core mission. 'I am making it a priority to ensure contaminated sites get cleaned up. We will be more hands-on to ensure proper oversight and attention to the Superfund program at the highest levels of the agency, and to create consistency across states,' Pruitt said."*

The Washington Examiner reports that Pruitt is working with local leaders to clean-up the East Chicago Superfund site. "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt on Friday joined Democrats and Republicans to reaffirm the agency's commitment to communities outside of Chicago hit by high levels of lead contamination. Pruitt had visited the Indiana city of

East Chicago last month affected by contamination from a closed lead production facility owned by the firm U.S. Steel that had been designated a Superfund cleanup site by the agency in 2009.”

The Washington Times reports Pruitt said that Barack Obama was no ‘environmental savior.’ *“Mr. Pruitt said the past administration talked a good game on the environment, but has little in the way of concrete accomplishments. He pointed to the environmental disaster in Flint, Michigan, and the Gold King Mine spill, both of which led to widespread water contamination. He also said the administration’s attempts to rein in carbon emissions were blocked by federal courts, as were other high-profile regulations. At the same time, Mr. Pruitt charged, much of the country remained in non-compliance with federal ozone standards, and the number of Superfund sites — areas contaminated by hazardous waste and identified for federal clean-up efforts — increased during Mr. Obama’s tenure.”*

The Hill reports that Pruitt was highly critical of the previous administration. *“Pruitt was also highly critical of his predecessor, naming similar environmental problems over the last eight years. ‘What’s so great about that record,’ he asked North Dakota conservative radio host Rob Port, after listing similar statistics about air quality, Superfund and the Flint and Gold King disasters. ‘I don’t quite understand the environmental left when they say that somehow, what the past administration, what was done, was so great.’”*

The Daily Caller reports that Pruitt said he sued the previous administration because they exceeded their statutory authority. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he sued the agency he heads so many times while Oklahoma attorney general because ‘they exceeded their statutory authority.’ ‘They deserved it and they deserved it because they exceeded their statutory authority, they exceeded their constitutional authority.’”*

Additionally, the Daily Caller notes that after the Flint water crisis, the previous administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received. *“Pruitt said the former administration does not deserve the plaudits it has received, especially after the EPA’s failure to fix Flint’s water system.”*

On Hugh Hewitt, Pruitt set the record straight about false information being circulated about the EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors. *“The board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. ... There was no firing that took place. These individuals can apply, will apply, I’m sure, in some instances, and very well could be put back on the board. But it’s the right thing to do to ensure transparency, its activity, peer-reviewed science and geographical representation on the board.”*

Need to Know Network reports that Pruitt said that Obama’s administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states. *“Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will. ... Pruitt went on to say that the EPA has restored a focus on “cooperative federalism” and working with the states.”*

To The States ...

The Tampa Bay Times reports that Pruitt met with Florida Governor Rick Scott to talk about water issues. *“[Governor Rick] Scott popped in for a visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk water issues.”*

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the EPA signed a proposed rule that will let North Dakota regulate CO2 storage wells. *“Tuesday marked a new day for North Dakota’s ability to regulate storage of carbon dioxide gas, an important part of a cleaner coal future. The federal Environmental Protection Agency took a first step toward giving the state primary authority to regulate federal Class VI wells for injecting CO2 into deep underground pore space for either long-term storage or for store-and-sell in enhanced oil recovery.”*

The Fargo Forum reports Pruitt promised a friendlier, more cooperative relationship with states. *“If you go back to the inception of the agency... Congress has been very insistent in saying the states have a role,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told me during an interview on my radio show today. ‘The past administration simply disregarded that,’ he continued.”*

The Grand Forks Herald reports that all of sudden North Dakota and the EPA are getting along. *“Under the Trump administration, there has been a big shift in our state’s relationship with that federal agency. ‘The days of coercive federalism are over,’ new EPA head Scott Pruitt said earlier this year in a letter to Governor Doug Burgum.”*

The Minot Daily News reports that North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum said EPA Administrator Pruitt will have the biggest single impact on his state. *“Gov. Doug Burgum said he thinks the biggest change for North Dakota as a result of the Trump administration is the president’s new team, in particular, two of its members. Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota.”*

Ozark News reports that Pruitt slammed the brakes on a pesticide rule from the Obama Administration. *“Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced a 12-month delay for the implementation of the Certification and Training of Pesticide Applicators rule. Pruitt says the new extension will enable EPA to work with states and provide adequate compliance and training resources, after the group received feedback from states and stakeholders that more time and resources were needed to prepare for compliance with the rule.”*

Oklahoma City’s KOCO-TV reports that the EPA awarded Oklahoma with an \$855,000 grant to protect water quality. *“The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$855,000 to the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy to support management of nonpoint-source water pollution, officials said in a news release. ... ‘Improving the Nation’s water is one of EPA’s highest priorities under the Trump administration,’ said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was Oklahoma’s attorney general before taking a position in President Donald Trump’s administration.”*

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Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460 United States

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Wed 1/17/2018 3:47:46 PM
Subject: Washington Examiner: Democrats probe for weak spots among Trump administration contractors, 1/16/18

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrats-probe-for-weak-spots-among-trump-administration-contractors/article/2646111>

Democrats probe for weak spots among Trump administration contractors

By John Siciliano, 1/16/18, 5:55 PM

Democrats are targeting a new perceived soft spot in the Trump administration's armor by going after "sweetheart" deals with companies contracted by federal agencies.

Democratic Reps. Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Alan Lowenthal of California sent a letter Tuesday to the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management asking for responses to financial and legal questions about a contract with EnergyNet, which was contracted to manage the agency's online oil and natural gas leasing program.

"It is notable that EnergyNet charges bidders a 1.5 percent 'buyer premium' on top of each bonus bid. In addition to being a windfall for EnergyNet, the premium potentially drives down the amount that companies are willing to bid, which effectively takes money that should be going to the American taxpayer and directs it to EnergyNet," the lawmakers wrote.

Grijalva, the top Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, and Lowenthal, the top Democrat on a minerals subcommittee, want the agency to give them copies of the EnergyNet contract and other documents so they can verify the terms of the deal detailed recently by the liberal think tank Center for American Progress and Outside Magazine.

"In the context of the hydraulic fracturing rule, which is intended to improve protections for the environment and public health, BLM found that an increase of 0.2 percent to the cost of a well was unjustly burdensome, but BLM has not expressed any similar concerns about this 1.5

percent buyer premium that potentially lowers taxpayer revenue," reads the letter.

The letter follows a successful push by Democratic lawmakers to get the EPA to rescind a contract with Virginia media consulting firm Definers Corp.

Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island and Kamala Harris of California challenged EPA's use of a no-bid basis in selecting the company to track stories written about the agency in the media.

Definers is a Republican opposition firm that has links to campaigns targeting such prominent Democrats as Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

"EPA's contract with Definers risks further politicizing the agency and is another instance of EPA under your tenure becoming captured by the industry it regulates," the senators wrote in a Dec. 19 letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "At a minimum, it presents an appearance of impropriety to which you as administrator should never be a party. For the reasons that follow, you should terminate this contract immediately."

The Democratic lawmakers cited that a \$120,000 no-bid contract was awarded to the PR firm, as reported by Mother Jones and the New York Times. Pressure mounted on the agency by consumer protection advocates and environmental firms that pressed for an investigation into the contract.

Soon after the senators sent the letter, the PR company decided to end its relationship with the EPA, stating that it has become too much of a "distraction" to continue.

On the oil and gas leasing contract, Grijalva's office said it was too early in the information collection process to consider any specific outcomes to the Democrat's probe into EnergyNet.

Democratic aides point out that they aren't specifically targeting one company, but the federal

process that allows contractors to take advantage of the bidding process.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 12/20/2017 10:43:55 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: Republicans ready to celebrate ANWR opening — Interior paid back for Zinke's Virgin Islands fundraiser — Collins expresses unease over White's nomination

By Anthony Adragna | 12/20/2017 05:41 AM EDT

PROGRAMMING NOTE: *Morning Energy* will not publish from Dec. 25-Jan. 1. Our next *Morning Energy* newsletter will publish on Tues. Jan. 2. Please continue to follow Pro Energy issues [here](#).

ON THE PRECIPICE: House lawmakers have to vote again this morning after [procedural snafus](#) in the Senate, but the Republican tax package [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#) now on a glide path to passage will realize the GOP's long-held objective of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas drilling. "It's a very special day," Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) told reporters before the vote. What seemed like a pipe dream just months ago turned into reality despite the vehement objections of Democrats and environmental groups. As written, the legislation calls for Interior to hold two lease sales for drilling in ANWR over the next decade and is estimated to raise \$1 billion over that period (though critics say those estimates are unrealistically rosy). The final tax package spares the solar and wind industries from provisions in earlier iterations they worried would cripple their sectors (reminder on those provisions [here](#)).

For the record: Six of the 12 House Republicans who signed a [letter](#) opposing ANWR drilling — [Carlos Curbelo](#), [Dave Reichert](#), [Ryan Costello](#), [Brian Fitzpatrick](#), [Pat Meehan](#) and [Mark Sanford](#) — voted in favor of the tax bill on Tuesday. In addition, 24 of the 31 GOP members of the Climate Solutions Caucus backed the package. That prompted Climate Hawks Vote to call for the group's dissolution: "With today's vote, the Climate Solutions Caucus has demonstrated its nihilism. The Democratic members of the caucus are only providing political cover for consistent Republican votes for climate destruction," RL Miller, the group's president, said in a statement.

Spotted: Murkowski sporting "Incredible Hulk" earrings and a scarf ahead of the final tax vote in tribute to the late-Sen. Ted Stevens, who spent decades trying to open ANWR to oil and gas drilling (and famously wore a "Hulk" tie ahead of tough policy battles). "I can't ever think about the ANWR debate without thinking about Ted," she told reporters, adding she met with her father, former Sen. Frank Murkowski, and Rep. [Don Young](#) to celebrate the impending victory in the decades-long fight. Picture via E&E's Geof Koss [here](#).

ANWR opponents aren't giving up: Environmental groups and lawmakers, including Sen. [Ed Markey](#), will "discuss what comes next" in the drilling fight during a press call this morning at 11 a.m. And top Senate Energy Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) took to the floor to note that "[w]e didn't create the Arctic coastal plain, but I can tell you this— we cannot re-create it. What we're doing today is taking a step towards destroying it."

Bashed: Majority Whip [John Cornyn](#) slammed a report he [personally inserted](#) a provision to give deductions to investors in master limited partnerships that are widely used in the oil and gas

business and specific lawmakers as "more fake news."

WHERE WE STAND ON THE CR: Amid opposition within their own ranks, House Republicans are changing strategy again and plan to extend funding until Jan. 19 for the whole government, POLITICO's John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade report. A \$81 billion disaster relief package, which faces surprisingly strong opposition, will get its own separate vote.

Meanwhile, The Senate is poised to load up its stopgap spending package with a host of goodies, including tens of billions in disaster relief spending, Cornyn told reporters Tuesday. But as Pro Budget & Appropriations Brief's Sarah Ferris reports, some House members say they will draw a hard line against potential Senate add-ons. "If they expect we're going to automatically accept it, that's about as smart as us thinking they're going to automatically accept what we send over," Tom Cole said.

Cornyn seemed pretty favorable to the House's \$81 billion disaster relief package, though he suggested changes were possible. "The amount is pretty generous but the need is tremendous — and it ranges all across the country from the wildfires out west to the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas and Louisiana," he said. "So we'll take a look at it and see whether it reflects the Senate's priorities but we ought to be able to work certainly within that number."

How long will we be here? That depends on who you ask. "We're prepared to be here as long as it takes," Cornyn said. Others bet on a quicker fold. "I actually believe that we'll send the Senate our thing, they'll adjust it, and ping it back to us, and we'll pass it," House appropriator Mike Simpson said.

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and NEI's Jonathan Rund correctly named nine House members as being 80 or older. For today: Minnesota is slated to have both senators up for election in 2018 with Sen. Al Franken's forthcoming resignation. When was the last time a state had both seats up in the same year? (Hint: It's not as unusual as you might think.) Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

SMALL PAYMENT, BIG IMPLICATIONS: Interior got back \$275 from the Virgin Islands Republican Party for an appearance Secretary Ryan Zinke made last spring at a fundraiser, a small payback with big legal weight, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. That's because the payment may shield Zinke from accusations that his appearance at the event where donors paid as much as \$5,000 per couple violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits government officials from using taxpayer resources to advance partisan causes. "The invoice was calculated to cover the political activities portion of the Secretary's travel to the USVI in accordance with Hatch Act regulations," spokeswoman Heather Swift said. "There is a formula used to determine what percentage of a given trip the political event makes up, and how much to reimburse."

But questions remain: The Virgin Islands Republican Party hasn't listed donations in its March and April FEC reports matching the amounts solicited for the fundraiser or from people on the guest list, making it impossible to know who shelled out big bucks for a picture with a Trump administration Cabinet official. The Caribbean fundraiser, which occurred during a three-day

official trip by Zinke to the island chain, is his only political event so far for which FEC filings show the Interior Department as having received reimbursement. Zinke has appeared at more than a dozen events with former campaign donors or conservative activists while traveling on official business, including at least four fundraisers for politicians or PACs, only two of which Interior says required reimbursements. But still, "they may be in technical compliance with the law, but from appearance's perspective there could be abuse," Virginia Canter of the group Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington told Ben.

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. **

ON THE CLOCK: EPA has until Jan. 12 to give a federal appeals court a timeline "with precision and specificity" for when it will issue a final rule identifying remaining parts of the U.S. that meet its tightened 2015 ozone standard, according to a Tuesday order. Democratic attorneys general, as well as environmental and public health groups, have sued the agency for not meeting a statutory deadline to identify whether many of the urban and downwind regions in the country meet the standard.

SEEMS LIKE A BIG DEAL: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo backed a push Tuesday to divest the state's \$200 billion pension fund from all fossil fuel investments, POLITICO New York's Marie J. French reports. He suggested no timeline for the divestment from fossil fuel companies but also called for the fund to stop any new investments in businesses with "significant fossil fuel-related activities." But state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, a long-time divestment opponent, did not support the move in a statement even as he vowed the fund would increase its low-carbon emission index fund investments.

LAWMAKERS PRESS TRUMP FOR 'STRONG' SOLAR REMEDY: About a dozen members of Congress are calling on President Donald Trump to take "strong and effective" action to protect the U.S. solar industry against foreign competition that they said could undermine U.S. energy independence. "In order to ensure electrical grid security, the U.S. cannot afford to become dependent on imports from China and other countries for cutting-edge [crystalline photovoltaic] solar cell and module technology," Sens. Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley and Sherrod Brown said in a letter to Trump. Eight House lawmakers sent a nearly identical letter making the same argument.

Trump faces a decision by the end of January on whether to restrict imports of solar cells and modules from around the world to give the U.S. industry time to become more competitive. The U.S. International Trade Commission has already recommended relief in an "emergency safeguard" case brought by Georgia-based Suniva and Oregon-based SolarWorld, but it is up to Trump to decide what, if any, action to take. "We urge you to impose a strong and effective remedy that will ensure a growing and competitive U.S. CSPV solar cell and module manufacturing industry and promote robust growth across our entire domestic solar industry," the lawmakers wrote.

FILL EM' UP? Murkowski said she's disappointed the Trump administration has yet to fill a host of "pretty high-profile" positions throughout the administration, such as leaders for the Fish & Wildlife Service, BLM and National Park Service. "We need to have these positions filled," she said, adding there are efforts afoot to clear some slots under the Energy Committee's jurisdiction via consent before the end of the year.

That Strange situation: There hasn't been any word about who will fill the slot of outgoing Alabama Sen. Luther Strange on the energy panel, Murkowski said, adding she expected Republican leadership would figure that out over the holiday break.

PROBE SOUGHT IN NOW-AXED CONTRACT: The Environmental Defense Fund asked EPA's inspector general to look into the agency's now-canceled contract with Definers Public Affairs for media monitoring services. "Although EPA reportedly intends to terminate its contract with Definers in light of widespread concern, a full investigation is essential to determine whether EPA's multifaceted interactions with Definers and its affiliates has led to improper uses of agency resources," the group wrote. Link here.

TRY AGAIN: Top Senate EPW Democrat Tom Carper said Tuesday he'll force the administration to resubmit the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White to run the Council on Environmental Quality next year, your ME host reports. "Unqualified or controversial nominees will not simply be rubber-stamped by the Senate," he said in a statement. Senators typically allow nominees not confirmed by the end of the first year of a congressional term to remain pending without forcing them to be renominated.

First Republican expresses unease: Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins told ME she'd viewed a clip White's confirmation hearing that "raised a lot of issues in my mind" but said she's not examined her record in-depth.

WON'T PAY FOR THIS: The Georgia Public Service Commission released a proposed order Tuesday that would prevent nearly \$500 million in costs from Georgia Power's Vogtle nuclear project from being passed on to consumers, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. "Basic fairness dictates that ratepayers should not have to pay for those excessive costs of the Project over which [Georgia Power] had some level of control," the proposed order reads. The commission is expected to vote on the order Thursday morning.

HEARING WATCH: A Senate EPW subcommittee looks at freight transportation today at 10 a.m. ME expects Monday's fatal accident in Washington state could dominate the discussion, but would also be on the lookout for discussion of the Trump administration's push to roll back Obama-era safety regulations for trains carrying crude oil. Watch here.

THANKS, NO THANKS: Citing "little hope you are working in good faith," the head of Patagonia pointedly declined the House Natural Resources Committee invitation to testify before the panel in a letter Tuesday. "I find it disingenuous that after unethically using taxpayers' resources to call us liars, you would ask me to testify in front of a committee for a matter already decided by the administration," founder Yvon Chouinard wrote. "It is clear the House Committee

on Natural Resources, like many committees in this failed Orwellian government, is shackled to special interests of oil, gas and mining."

MAIL CALL! HERE'S SOME IDEAS ON PERMITTING: The National Association of Clean Air Agencies sent a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on Tuesday offering "principles and recommendations" for the agency to consider as it mulls tweaks to its Clean Air Act permitting programs. Read it [here](#).

NOT LOOKING GOOD: Three freshmen House Democrats said Tuesday they doubted the administration would make a host of changes to NAFTA, including significantly strengthening environmental provisions, to secure their support, Pro Trade's Doug Palmer [reports](#). "I'm not seeing a lot of hope," Rep. [Pramila Jayapal](#) said at a press conference on Capitol Hill with Reps. [Jamie Raskin](#) and [Ro Khanna](#).

ICYMI: The White House suffered an embarrassing defeat as former Rep. Scott Garrett's selection to run the Export-Import Bank went down 10-13 in the Senate Banking Committee on Tuesday, Pro Financial Services' Zachary Warmbrodt [reports](#). It also stings for Vice President Mike Pence, who worked for months to boost the nomination despite doubts from some administration officials, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia and Zachary [report](#).

QUICK HITS

- France to ban all oil, gas production by 2040. [CBS News](#).
- Judge rules state can't enforce Inslee order to cut greenhouse-gas emissions. [Seattle Times](#).
- Shutdown Starts for Coal-Fired Plant Serving US Southwest. [AP](#).
- E.P.A. Delays Bans on Uses of Hazardous Chemicals. [New York Times](#).
- Oil Gains as Pipeline Outage Continues. [Wall Street Journal](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

10:00 a.m. — "[Freight Movement: Assessing Where We Are Now And Where We Need To Go](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

11:00 a.m. — Broad coalition including Sen. Markey hold call on tax bill and next steps on ANWR, RSVP: Caitlyn@waxmanstrategies.com

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, **helping to boost the U.S. economy**, was signed into law ten years ago this week. According to a recent analysis in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, the RFS boosted the value of the U.S. agricultural sector by \$14.1 billion in 2015, or nearly \$6,800 per American farm. Thanks to

the RFS, corn prices averaged \$3.58 per bushel in 2015; without the program, corn prices would have averaged just \$2.75 per bushel, far below the cost of production.. Last year, the production of 15.3 billion gallons of ethanol supported more than 339,000 direct and indirect jobs across all sectors of the economy. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. #thankyouRFS **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/republicans-ready-to-celebrate-anwr-opening-058030>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Senate passes tax bill, teeing up final House vote [Back](#)

By Brian Faler | 12/19/2017 11:45 AM EDT

The Senate cleared the Republican tax overhaul early Wednesday, putting the GOP on the cusp of the major legislative victory that has eluded it all year.

The sweeping \$1.5 trillion package of tax cuts and tax code revisions will have to go back to the House for another vote later Wednesday after a procedural glitch in the Senate. But that vote is considered a formality, and President Donald Trump is expected to sign the bill before the week is out.

"From a Republican point of view, this is as good as it gets and we're more than happy to take our argument [for the tax bill] to the American people in an election contest," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in an interview with POLITICO before the chamber's 51-48 vote.

Democrats have vowed to make the legislation a liability for Republicans going into the 2018 mid-term election, arguing most of its benefits will go to wealthy individuals and corporations.

President Donald Trump sent out an early morning [tweet](#) hailing the Senate's passage of the tax plan, which includes a repeal of Obamacare's requirement that people have health insurance or face a fine.

"The United States Senate just passed the biggest in history Tax Cut and Reform Bill. Terrible Individual Mandate (ObamaCare) Repealed. Goes to the House tomorrow morning for final vote. If approved, there will be a News Conference at The White House at approximately 1:00 P.M.," Trump wrote.

The procedural glitch put a damper on Republican plans to get the bill to Trump on Tuesday. House Republicans were barely done celebrating their initial 227-203 vote in favor of the legislation when word spread that several provisions of the bill ran afoul of Senate rules. That meant the Senate had to remove those provisions, approve the bill and send it back to the House for another vote.

One offending provision involved using tax-advantaged college savings accounts for home schooling expenses. Another - important to McConnell — would have protected Kentucky's private Berea College from a proposed excise tax on university endowment earnings.

The stumble was an embarrassment for Republicans. It also played into the hands of Democrats who complain the legislation has been moving so quickly through the Capitol that it's been poorly vetted.

"The House revote is the latest evidence of just how shoddily written the GOP tax scam really is," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said in a statement after it was clear the chamber would have to take another vote.

But McConnell called the problem "a couple of little glitches" in an interview with Fox News, and it didn't appear to slow the bill's momentum at all.

The swift pace of final action underscores Republicans' determination to wrap up the tax bill by their self-imposed year-end deadline and before Democrat Doug Jones is seated as Alabama's new senator. Republicans also need to turn to other matters this week, notably keeping the government running beyond a Friday deadline.

For House Speaker Paul Ryan, the legislation is the culmination of a career-long pursuit of overhauling the tax code.

"This is a day I have looked forward to for a very long time," he said on the House floor Tuesday. "Today is about how much better things can be: More jobs, fairer taxes and bigger paychecks. Faster growth and real upward mobility. A strong economy that makes all of us stronger."

Democrats scoffed, calling the legislation a giveaway to the rich.

"The bill provides crumbs and tax hikes for middle-class families in this country, and a Christmas gift to major corporations and billionaire investors," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. "How can Republicans defend this? The only people who want it are their very wealthy paymasters."

House Republicans were largely united on the bill in Tuesday's vote, a departure from the usual drama in the chamber over major legislation, which often gets tripped up by hardline conservatives.

Still, 12 House GOP lawmakers voted against the bill, all but one from high-tax New York, New Jersey and California. They objected to how the legislation scaled back a state and local tax writeoff, which they complained would mean tax hikes for many of their constituents.

The legislation would be the biggest tax rewrite in decades, and would slash the corporate tax rate for the first time in 30 years, overhaul the taxation of both small and large businesses and reduce rates on individuals.

With an eye toward next year's midterm elections, Republicans are emphasizing the millions - 80 percent of taxpayers, according to the independent Tax Policy Center - who would see a tax cut next year. The average break would total \$2,100, the group said Monday, though the benefits would vary widely by income.

Democrats are emphasizing how much of the cuts would accrue to the highest earners along with the minority of taxpayers - about 5 percent, according to the Tax Policy Center - who would pay more next year under the plan.

Americans are broadly skeptical of the tax plan.

One new poll shows low overall public support for the bill, but strong backing among Republicans. Only 33 percent of all respondents to a [CNN poll](#) released Tuesday supported the plan, but among just Republican respondents support stood at 76 percent. Democratic opposition was overwhelming: 89 percent.

Republicans got slightly better news from a new [POLITICO/Morning Consult poll](#). The survey shows 42 percent of voters support the legislation and 39 percent oppose it, with another 18 percent undecided.

McConnell dismissed the polling.

"If we can't sell this to the American people we ought to go into another line of work," he said after the Senate vote. "I think it's a little easier to sell that you have more money in your pocket than the government running the health care system."

Lawmakers are sure to continue battling over the legislation long after Trump inks it into law.

The plan would make the government's budget outlook substantially worse, adding \$1.456 trillion to a debt that's already nearly doubled over the past decade. Federal red ink is now at the highest levels it's been since the government was paying down its World War II debts, and that's sure to stoke calls to rein in the deficit.

Democrats are already accusing Republicans of using the worsening debt as a pretext for controversial cuts in government entitlement programs.

What's more, much of the Republican plan is only temporary, with many provisions beginning to expire after next year. Most of the individual breaks would be gone by 2026, ensuring ongoing battles over their fate, much like lawmakers wrestled for years over what to do with George W. Bush's tax cuts or their annual practice of extending dozens of expiring tax breaks.

The plan may also alter Republicans' relationship with the IRS. For years they've beaten up on the tax agency, yet they are now relying on it to implement their proposal. In section after section, their plan delegates authority to the IRS to figure out the details of how the provisions would work, an increased workload that will make it harder for lawmakers to continue pounding

on the agency politically and slashing its budget.

For taxpayers, the bill will mean major - and sudden - changes in policy, most of which will take effect on New Year's Day. The bill would hit urban areas particularly hard through cuts to the mortgage interest deduction, a long-standing break for state and local taxes, subsidies for public transportation, and a key funding method for roads and other public projects.

But because the bill was largely written in secret - a final draft was only released last Friday - tax experts are still poring through the legislation trying to understand the changes.

Cristiano Lima, Colin Wilhelm, Aaron Lorenzo, Seung Min Kim, Rachael Bade and Michael Stratford contributed to this report.

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Solar, wind get reprieve in final tax bill [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre | 12/15/2017 06:57 PM EDT

The [conference tax bill](#) released Friday by Congressional Republicans resolves a slew of issues faced by the energy industry.

— **Wind and solar credits saved:** The final tax bill, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), follows the Senate's bill when it comes to the production tax credit and the solar tax credit, meaning both are left untouched. The House bill had proposed reducing the value of the PTC and changing when a project qualified for it, and it had proposed dropping the permanent 10 percent credit for the ITC. Both credits will phase down as agreed to in a deal struck in 2015.

— **MLP benefits added:** It also includes language Sen. [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas) proposed that would give deductions to investors in master limited partnerships, the corporate structure for many pipeline companies.

— **EVs roll on:** A tax credit for electric vehicles was preserved.

— **Oil recovery restored:** Credits for abandoned oil wells and enhanced oil recovery that were eliminated in the House version were restored in the final bill.

— **Selling off the oil:** The bill retains the Senate language that would sell up to \$600 million in Strategic Petroleum Reserve oil to offset any shortfall from opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Senate language forecast drilling in ANWR would generate \$1 billion in revenue over 10 years, an estimate critics have said is too optimistic.

— **More revenue sharing:** The bill also temporarily lifts offshore Gulf of Mexico oil and gas

production revenue sharing caps to \$650 million annually for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, up from a previous limit of \$500 million, to support coastal restoration and protection projects.

— **Base erosion eased for renewables:** Tax writers created some room to keep banks and other financiers of renewable projects in the game by allowing them to take 80 percent of the credits for the PTC and the ITC.

— **No tax extenders:** Numerous senators have been saying it for weeks now, and the bill makes it official: None of the expired tax credits for small wind, fuel cells, and other "orphans" made it into the conference bill. The extension of the nuclear tax credit that was in the House bill has also been dropped.

— **Utilities still get to deduct interest:** The bill preserves provisions in both the House and Senate versions that allowed utilities to continue to deduct interest on loans without the limitation placed on other businesses.

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House Republicans ditch partisan spending plan ahead of shutdown [Back](#)

By John Bresnahan and Rachael Bade | 12/19/2017 10:32 PM EDT

Facing opposition within their own ranks — and a potential government shutdown — House Republicans are once again changing their strategy on a funding bill.

Gone is the plan for a bill funding the Pentagon for the rest of the fiscal year and other government agencies until mid-January. Now House Republicans will extend funding only until Jan. 19 for the whole government, hoping the new strategy will produce enough support to stave off a funding lapse come midnight Friday.

A massive \$81 billion disaster aid bill will be broken out and have a separate vote. There is surprisingly strong opposition to that package, which was unveiled by the House Appropriations Committee only on Monday.

It is still unclear whether GOP leaders will include funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program as part of the new funding bill. And while some defense programs are expected to get a boost under the plan, those details are still under wraps.

A proposal to reauthorize so-called Section 702 spying powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act will go as a standalone bill as well.

A Senate plan to add bipartisan Obamacare stabilization funds to the funding bill — known as a continuing resolution — looks dead on arrival in the House. That is likely to spur a tense

legislative back-and-forth in the final hours before funding is set to expire this week.

The change in direction shows once again how difficult it is for House Speaker Paul Ryan to get anything through the House, especially if he is relying on GOP votes alone.

Republican House leaders had planned to hold a vote Wednesday on the initial funding bill, seen as a way to placate the party's most conservative members. But after deciding to tack on billions of dollars in disaster aid — with all that money set to add directly to the deficit — those same members ultimately reneged on commitments of support.

Now, House GOP leaders hope to vote on all these bills on Thursday, and then adjourn, leaving the Senate to finish up consideration of the measures. Top Republicans believe Senate Democrats will accept the plan and avoid a government shutdown, or having to return to Washington next week.

For their part, Democrats are already jumping at the opportunity to note the GOP's miscalculation.

"Republican leadership is so preoccupied with their tax giveaway to corporations and contributors that they managed to get surprised by this — the most predictable train wreck in history," said Matt Dennis, Democratic communications director for the House Appropriations Committee.

Sarah Ferris and Jennifer Scholtes contributed to this report.

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Senate to pack stopgap bill with CHIP, disaster aid, Obamacare subsidy fix [Back](#)

By Sarah Ferris | 12/19/2017 04:18 PM EDT

Senate GOP leaders are planning to load up this week's must-pass spending bill with contentious provisions ranging from Obamacare subsidies to surveillance powers, the No. 2 Republican said Tuesday.

Senate Majority Whip [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas) told reporters Tuesday afternoon that the stopgap spending bill would serve as a catchall for a spate of "must-do" policy items — offering the clearest signal yet of the chamber's plan to avoid a shutdown on Friday.

Cornyn's checklist includes broadly bipartisan initiatives like funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, disaster recovery dollars and veterans' health care.

But it also includes thorny issues like a funding fix for Obamacare cost-sharing subsidies and a

renewal of the cyber surveillance tools authorized under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

The Senate's stopgap bill would also include procedural language to avert massive cuts to social programs next year, under Congress' PAYGO rule, Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) told POLITICO on Tuesday.

Both chambers must agree to waive those cuts — triggered by the GOP's costly tax plan, H.R. 1 (115) — by mid-January to avoid cuts to mandatory programs like Medicare and farm subsidies.

The Senate's funding strategy, which has been buried amid the furious scramble for a tax bill, threatens an eleventh-hour showdown with the House.

Government funding expires Friday, and congressional leaders are facing a half-dozen daunting deadlines before they leave for a weekslong Christmas break.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell hinted at those must-resolve items Monday night, though he did not specifically say they would all be added to the government funding bill.

House Republicans are planning to vote Wednesday on a stopgap spending bill that looks substantially different from the Senate's plan. The vehicle for that continuing resolution is expected to be H.R. 1370 (115).

But Cornyn rejected the House plan outright.

"I doubt, unfortunately, that will survive," Cornyn told reporters. "We've got to do the math, get 60 votes."

Under pressure from their far-right flank, House GOP leaders have crafted a bill that includes a full year of funding for the Pentagon, with a patch through Jan. 19 for domestic programs. It includes a massive \$81 billion disaster funding bill, but it leaves out almost every other policy item on the Senate GOP's list.

The House would fund CHIP, but it would include partisan pay-fors that Democrats have already rejected.

The only item that both House and Senate Republicans have agreed to punt is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Some Democrats, however, are still demanding a fix by year's end.

House Speaker Paul Ryan warned members in a closed-door meeting Tuesday morning that their funding bill is likely to be altered in the Senate.

But some House members say they will draw a hard line against potential Senate add-ons.

"If they expect we're going to automatically accept it, that's about as smart as us thinking they're

going to automatically accept what we send over," Rep. [Tom Cole](#) (R-Okla.) said.

There are big questions remaining about how exactly the Senate would pay for the CHIP funding and which version of the Section 702 renewal would be included.

"My suspicion is, probably what we're going to be looking at is a short-term extension," Cornyn said about the 702 surveillance powers.

When asked if the funding bill could clear both chambers before the deadline, Cornyn replied: "We're prepared to be here as long as it takes."

To view online [click here](#).

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Interior reimbursed for Zinke Virgin Island fundraiser, but contributions unaccounted for

[Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 12/19/2017 06:57 PM EDT

Taxpayers have been reimbursed for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's participation in a political fundraiser last spring in the Virgin Islands — but questions remain about the donations he helped solicit, according to campaign finance records and interviews.

The Virgin Islands Republican Party repaid on Oct. 5 the Interior Department \$275 for expenses related to Zinke's appearance, according to recent federal campaign finance filings. Despite its small sum, the reimbursement carries significant legal implications. And it came on the same day [POLITICO first reported](#) that Zinke was the featured guest at the March 30 fundraiser, where records indicate that donors paid as much as \$5,000 per couple for a chance to pose for a photo with the secretary.

The Virgin Islands Republican Party — a political action committee nominally based in the islands but run by a Washington-area GOP consultant — did not list any donations matching those amounts in its Federal Election Commission reports for March and April. That makes it impossible to know who may have paid thousands of dollars for access to a member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, whose office has refused to provide advanced schedules of his travels and appearances.

Still, the reimbursement may be enough to protect Zinke from accusations that his Virgin Islands appearance violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits government officials from using taxpayer resources to advance partisan causes. Zinke is facing multiple investigations for his pattern of mixing politics and official business during taxpayer-funded travels.

The Caribbean fundraiser, which occurred during a three-day official trip by Zinke to the island chain, is his only political event so far for which the Interior Department has received

reimbursement.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said the department invoiced the VIGOP PAC for the amount. Swift did not reply to questions as to the timing of Interior's request for reimbursement.

"The invoice was calculated to cover the political activities portion of the secretary's travel to the USVI in accordance with Hatch Act regulations," Swift said. "There is a formula used to determine what percentage of a given trip the political event makes up, and how much to reimburse."

Swift said Interior had not sought reimbursement related to Zinke's stop at a fundraiser for Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) at an Anchorage steakhouse, or his attendance at a ski resort weekend organized by the leadership PAC of Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), which POLITICO previously reported. The amount of time Zinke spent at the Young fundraiser did not meet the minimum required to merit repayment under Hatch Act regulations, and Interior did not require reimbursement for the fundraiser in Montana because Zinke was on his personal time, Swift said.

Zinke also attended a July fundraiser for Republican Rep. Greg Walden in Oregon, which was reported in a local media account from the time. Swift said Interior has issued an invoice to Walden's campaign for that trip. The campaign's most recent FEC disclosures, which run through Sept. 30, do not show any payments to Interior.

The independent Office of Special Counsel, which investigates possible Hatch Act violations, has said in previous cases that timely reimbursement of the government's expenses is sufficient to avoid violating federal regulations that prohibit taxpayer dollars from paying for political activity. OSC, which declined to comment, is one of several agencies investigating Zinke's political activities.

Federal employees can face reprimands or even lose their jobs for violating the Hatch Act, but it is up to the president to decide how to punish violations by presidential appointees. OSC found that two members of former President Barack Obama's Cabinet had violated the Hatch Act, but neither faced major penalties.

Interior "should not be paying for any of Zinke's political travel," said Brendan Fischer, director of the bipartisan watchdog group Campaign Legal Center's federal and FEC reform program. "That being said, there is certainly a pattern of Zinke and other administration officials mixing official and political business, which the inspector general is looking into. Public resources are supposed to be used to advance the public interest, not to coddle political donors."

Besides reimbursing Interior for Zinke's appearance, VIGOP also paid \$875 for catering for a "VIGOP event" on March 30, according to FEC documents. That suggested the federal PAC was the one raising contributions at the event, Fischer said. But it does not appear to have disclosed at least some contributions associated with the appearance, something Fischer said could be a violation of campaign finance laws.

VIGOP has a murky relationship with the U.S. territory's official Republican Party organization,

which has been riven by its own internal conflicts in recent years. The FEC classifies VIGOP as a nonparty PAC and lists its treasurer as Scott B. Mackenzie, a D.C.-area political operative who declined to comment when reached by POLITICO.

Zinke has for years worked with the VIGOP, attending at least two of its meetings on the island while he was a Montana congressman. Zinke's own fundraising organizations spent millions of dollars on a group of political operatives tied to the PAC, including direct mailing company Forthright Strategies, whom Republicans have accused of preying on small donors. POLITICO first reported a week before the reimbursement on Zinke's use of a charter flight to travel to the islands on official business.

The chairman of the territorial Republican Party, John Canegata, said the fundraiser had been the work of the territorial party, not the PAC, and would be listed in reports filed with the Virgin Islands' election committee.

"All our donations, we will put that together in a form they provide and give that to them at the end of the year," Canegata told POLITICO.

Campaign finance reports for groups registered with the islands' government are due in June and December of each year, a spokeswoman for Election Services of the Virgin Islands said. Money raised at a March fundraiser would have had to have been reported on the June disclosure report, the spokeswoman said.

VIGOP is not officially part of the Virgin Island Republican Party structure and is not registered with the Elections System of the Virgin Islands as a fundraising organization, said Genevieve Whitaker, deputy supervisor of elections for the agency's St. Croix district.

Other Republicans in the Virgin Islands Republican territorial committee have complained about Canegata's relationship with Mackenzie's VIGOP, saying very little, if any, of the money Mackenzie's organization raises gets distributed to the party or candidates.

The committee also complained that Canegata signed a contract in 2013, a copy of which was obtained by POLITICO, identifying VIGOP as a client of Base Connect, a direct mail fundraising company that other Republicans have accused of exploiting small donors. Political committees linked to Zinke have long done business with many of the same political consultants as VIGOP.

An invitation for the March 30 event in St. Croix solicited donations of up to \$5,000 per couple to be event "patrons" or \$1,500 to be part of its "host committee." According to Zinke's schedule, he participated in a photo line with donors in those categories. But no donations in VIGOP's federal campaign finance reports match the names of 10 other individuals listed as guests of honor on the invitation, which was obtained by POLITICO.

VIGOP reported 88 donations in March and April, mostly between \$100 and \$500 apiece. Three donations of \$1,000 were the largest received in those months.

However, VIGOP's decision to reimburse Interior may insulate Zinke from some potential sanctions associated with his political behavior, judging by previous cases.

The Office of Special Counsel in 2012 determined that then-Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius had violated the Hatch Act by endorsing Obama's reelection and a local gubernatorial candidate during a speech in North Carolina at a gala for the Human Rights Campaign, where she was appearing on official business.

After HHS began receiving media inquiries about the speech, it reclassified the event as political and sought reimbursement from Obama's campaign and the Democratic National Committee. While the OSC said her remarks themselves violated the Hatch Act, it determined that HHS had satisfied requirements that the government be reimbursed for costs associated with political appearances.

In 2016, OSC determined that then-Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro had violated the law when he endorsed Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in an interview with Yahoo News anchor Katie Couric.

Since joining Trump's Cabinet in March, Zinke has appeared at more than a dozen events with former campaign donors or conservative activists while traveling on official business, including at least four fundraisers for politicians or PACs, according to a POLITICO review of his schedule, event invitations, Interior Department emails and other documents.

The sort of mixing of official business with political activity that Zinke has engaged in could lead to an ethical breach even if it is legal, said Virginia Canter, executive branch ethics counsel for good-governance watchdog group Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington.

"What you become very concerned about is if you see the political activity driving the official activity," Canter said. "They may be in technical compliance with the law, but from appearance's perspective there could be abuse."

Zinke is under investigation by OSC and the Interior Department's inspector general. The FEC has separately raised questions about VIGOP's spending and is looking into Zinke's former leadership PAC, which relied on many of the same political consultants as the VIGOP.

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GOP firm ends controversial media monitoring contract with EPA [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 12/19/2017 02:32 PM EDT

The Republican media monitoring firm Definers Public Affairs canceled its \$120,000 contract with Environmental Protection Agency after a media backlash because of the company's links to

GOP opposition research firm America Rising.

Earlier this year, America Rising filed several Freedom of Information Act requests for communications from EPA career staffers who had been critical of Administrator Scott Pruitt or President Donald Trump. That included email sent by John O'Grady, a top union official at the EPA, that "mentions or refers to President Trump."

News reports about the two efforts to monitor news coverage about the agency and dig up information about dissenting staffers stirred new accusations that Pruitt is fostering an atmosphere of paranoia and distrust at EPA.

Definers described the decision to end the contract as mutual, although EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox would not say whether the agency or company initiated the cancellation.

Definers President Joe Pounder said in a written statement that previous administrations paid more for slower services, but "it's become clear this will become a distraction. As a result, Definers and the EPA have decided to forgo the contract." He added that the firm will not offer its services to any other federal agencies.

Mother Jones first reported on the contract, and The New York Times documented the ties between Definers and America Rising, which was also started by Pounder.

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Carper to force White House to renominate White in 2018 [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 12/19/2017 04:50 PM EDT

Sen. Tom Carper, top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, said today that he will force the Trump administration to renominate Kathleen Hartnett White to run the White House Council on Environmental Quality in 2018.

"Unqualified or controversial nominees will not simply be rubber-stamped by the Senate," Carper said in a statement. "Let's start the new year off with a clean slate and allow President Trump the opportunity to nominate a leader for the Council on Environmental Quality who takes environmental laws and public health protections seriously."

Senators typically allow nominees not confirmed by the end of the first year of a congressional term to remain pending without forcing them to be renominated. But Carper said White's controversial views on climate change and other environmental matters means she shouldn't be afforded that courtesy.

That comes as the first Republican senator expressed unease with White's nomination. Sen.

Susan Collins told POLITICO she had viewed a clip of her confirmation hearing that "raised a lot of issues in my mind" but said she's not examined her record in-depth.

WHAT'S NEXT: Carper said he plans to object to any unanimous consent motions that would keep White's nomination pending after Congress adjourns for the year. That would force the White House to resubmit the nomination in 2018.

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Georgia PSC staff issue proposed order curbing Vogtle cost recovery [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 12/19/2017 04:53 PM EDT

Staff at the Georgia Public Service Commission released a proposed order this afternoon for regulators that would prevent nearly \$500 million in costs from Georgia Power's Vogtle nuclear project from being passed on to consumers.

"The Project is uneconomic on a going forward basis by \$1.6 billion," the [25-page proposed order](#) reads.

"Basic fairness dictates that ratepayers should not have to pay for those excessive costs of the Project over which [Georgia Power] had some level of control," the order adds.

Southern Co.'s Georgia Power has asked state regulators to approve \$542 million it spent on the two-reactor project over the first six months of the year. But PSC's Public Interest Advocacy staff have argued that the company should only be allowed to pass \$44 million to consumers.

The over-budget project, which has received \$8.33 billion in Energy Department financing as well as other [conditional commitments](#) from the agency, hit a major setback earlier this year when contractor Westinghouse filed for bankruptcy. Reducing Georgia Power's ability to recoup its expenses on the project would cast considerable doubt on whether it continues to build the reactors.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Georgia PSC, whose leaders have tried to keep the program going, is expected to vote on the order Thursday morning.

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Freshman Democrats urge Trump to 'flip NAFTA on its head' to get their support [Back](#)

By Doug Palmer | 12/19/2017 02:21 PM EDT

Four freshman House Democrats said today President Donald Trump could win their support for a revamped NAFTA agreement, but expressed doubt that he would make the changes necessary to benefit workers.

"I'm not seeing a lot of hope," Rep. [Pramila Jayapal](#) (D-Wash.) said at a press conference on Capitol Hill with Reps. [Jamie Raskin](#) (D-Md.), [Val Demings](#) (D-Fla.) and [Ro Khanna](#) (D-Calif.).

"I do believe he's going to have a challenge now if he reauthorizes NAFTA in a way that doesn't do what he talked about" during last year's presidential campaign, Jayapal continued. "But we all know, he's the master of saying one thing and doing another thing."

So far, the signs for finding common ground don't bode well, Raskin said, citing how Trump has embraced a tax reform bill that mainly benefits "the 1 percent."

Raskin said it was possible that Trump would keep his promises to make NAFTA a better agreement for workers, "but that's just hope over experience because everything so far has just been written by corporate special interests."

Jayapal, Raskin, Khanna and 18 other House freshmen Democrats sent a [letter](#) to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer last month outlining their demands for changes in the nearly 24-year-old NAFTA agreement.

Those include significantly strengthening the labor and environmental provisions, eliminating the controversial investor-state dispute settlement mechanism and protecting "Buy American" set-asides for U.S. manufacturers by getting rid of waivers for Canada and Mexico in the pact. They also called on the administration to open up the negotiating process and give workers more opportunity to influence the negotiations.

"We're hopeful that the ambassador will follow our guidelines and flip this trade agreement on its head so it actually works for working people," Jayapal said.

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GOP defectors block Trump nominee to head Ex-Im Bank [Back](#)

By Zachary Warmbrodt | 12/19/2017 11:42 AM EDT

Two Senate Republicans joined with Democrats on Tuesday to block the confirmation of President Donald Trump's pick to head the Export-Import Bank, a rare rejection of a Trump appointee by members of his own party and prominent business groups.

The outcome had been building for months after the White House and the nominee, former Rep. Scott Garrett (R-N.J.), failed to win over lawmakers who were suspicious of why Garrett would want to lead an agency that he tried to shut down when he served in Congress.

Garrett went down in a 13-10 vote by the Senate Banking Committee. Sens. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Tim Scott (R-S.C.) voted against him.

"We need to both reform the Export-Import Bank and ensure it continues to function as an important tool for American businesses," Scott said. "Given Mr. Garrett's long history opposing the Ex-Im Bank, I believe it would be hard for him to accomplish both of those goals."

The vote was the latest battle in a long-running war over the future of the Export-Import Bank, which guarantees loans for foreign buyers of U.S. exports.

Garrett's rejection was a victory for business groups that have been fighting off attempts by conservatives to grind the agency's operations to a halt. In Congress, Garrett was among those who fought to kill the bank, which he said "embodies the corruption of the free enterprise system."

Robert Wasinger, a former Trump campaign official, said Garrett's nomination was a "too-clever-by-half attempt to appease the Freedom Caucus faction" of the GOP.

"Garrett was a divisive pick inside the Republican caucus that was bound to be a debacle from the get go," he said.

Part of that divisiveness stemmed from Garrett's social views, which have sparked controversy. An issue that weighed on his unsuccessful reelection bid last year was a 2015 POLITICO story reporting that he told lawmakers he did not pay National Republican Congressional Committee dues because it recruited gay candidates. He later denied that he opposed gay candidates and said his concern was about support for same-sex marriage.

The Banking Committee on Tuesday approved four less-controversial nominees to serve on the bank's board, which is lacking enough members to approve transactions worth more than \$10 million.

The nominees are former Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), Kimberly Reed, Judith Pryor and Claudia Slacik.

Though the four advanced with bipartisan support, they could remain in limbo for months. Sens. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), who wanted to see Garrett appointed, have pledged to derail the confirmation of other nominees.

Lawmakers critical of the bank could force the Senate to spend several days' worth of floor time to consider the nominees if Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) chooses to move forward.

They could also force the Senate to let the nominations expire at the end of this year because of

Senate rules that require lawmakers to agree to carry over unresolved appointments to the next session of Congress.

"We are disappointed that the Senate Banking Committee missed this opportunity to get the Export-Import Bank fully functioning again," White House director of legislative affairs Marc Short said in a statement. "We will continue to work with the committee on a path forward."

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Garrett's failure to win Ex-Im confirmation stings Pence, too [Back](#)

By Zachary Warmbrodt and Andrew Restuccia | 12/19/2017 06:02 PM EDT

The [decision](#) by a bipartisan group of senators to block President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Export-Import Bank marked a stinging defeat for Vice President Mike Pence, who worked for months to boost the nomination despite doubts from some administration officials.

Pence continued to push senators to support former New Jersey Republican Rep. Scott Garrett's nomination to lead the bank until the final hours before the Senate Banking Committee met for a vote Tuesday morning, according to lawmakers and others briefed on the issue.

But Pence's entreaties on behalf of his old conservative congressional ally weren't enough to mollify lawmakers after major manufacturers and trade groups raised concerns about Garrett's ability to oversee an agency he once tried to shut down.

Every Democrat and two Republicans — Sens. Mike Rounds of South Dakota and Tim Scott of South Carolina — voted against Garrett's nomination in a rare rebuke of a nominee by members of the president's own party.

Rounds told POLITICO he spoke with Pence about the nomination several times and that the vice president reached out to him Monday night before the vote. "He made it very clear his interest in having the nomination go forward," Rounds said. "I expressed to him my concerns with the nomination and hope that we could find some other alternative."

A Pence spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment.

Tuesday's committee vote capped eight months of drama over the nomination, with constant speculation that Garrett would be pushed out by the administration or withdraw amid vocal opposition to the pick from some Republican senators.

Some administration officials had long ago given up hope that Garrett could win Senate approval, privately grouching that the White House should cut its losses and find a replacement, according to a person briefed on the discussions. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin privately

raised concerns about Garrett's nomination, an administration official told POLITICO.

Trump himself, facing intense pressure from business groups who rely on the bank, weighed pulling the nomination, though administration officials later said the president would give Garrett a chance to secure enough support in the Senate.

But Pence remained a steadfast backer of Garrett.

The two served together in the House and are said to share similar worldviews. In Senate testimony last month, Garrett thanked Pence for "taking the time to have been as supportive as he has been of my nomination."

In October 2016, when Trump was heard bragging about sexual assault in a 2005 "Access Hollywood" recording, Garrett denounced Trump — and said Pence would be the best nominee to defeat Hillary Clinton.

Garrett was nominated to lead the bank after losing his New Jersey seat, in part because of his social views. POLITICO reported in 2015 that he'd refused to pay National Republican Congressional Committee dues because it recruited gay candidates. He subsequently denied that he opposed gay candidates and said his problem was about support for same-sex marriage.

But Garrett was known as a crusader against the bank — long a favorite target of fiscally conservative Republican lawmakers — when he served in Congress, once saying the bank "embodies the corruption of the free enterprise system."

Garrett's record alarmed companies that have benefited from the loan guarantees that it offers foreign buyers of U.S. exports. Firms including Boeing and General Electric, as well as trade groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers, fought the nomination for months. After being nominated, he tried to make the case that he would keep the bank fully functional.

One person familiar with the matter said Pence repeatedly discussed the nomination with senators on the Senate Banking Committee in recent months.

"It's Mike Pence," Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) said when asked who was driving the nomination. "It's the vice president."

The White House pushed back against the notion that Pence was the sole advocate for Garrett in the administration. "It was the president's nomination," a White House official told POLITICO.

As it became clear last week that Garrett didn't have the votes to clear the committee, some in Washington began scratching their heads, wondering why the White House didn't save itself the embarrassment and quietly pull the nomination.

"At least for a while early in this process, I think they legitimately thought that Garrett could get the votes," U.S. Chamber of Commerce chief policy officer Neil Bradley said. "Once it became clear that Garrett couldn't get the votes, I'm not sure why they persisted to move all the way

through to an actual vote and have him defeated."

Rounds said he shared his reservations about Garrett "very early on" and that he wanted to give the White House an opportunity to withdraw the nomination. Rounds held off announcing his "no" vote until the committee publicly announced the timing of the vote last week.

Garrett's failure to win confirmation was the latest roadblock for one of Trump's nominees. The president has withdrawn more than a dozen nominees since he took office in January, and the White House is coming under new scrutiny for what critics call its poor vetting of candidates for key jobs.

"We're going to work with the committee on a path forward," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said at Tuesday's press briefing. "That hasn't yet been determined. We're certainly very disappointed in the Senate Banking Committee."

White House officials said they were placed in a difficult situation with the Garrett nomination that reflected deep divisions within the Republican Party over the merits of the Ex-Im Bank.

Republican senators who were critical of the bank strongly backed the Garrett pick, seeing it as a sign that the administration supported major changes to the way the agency operates. Those senators made it clear to the White House that if the president pulled the Garrett nomination, they would try to block other nominees to the agency, further complicating the efforts to fill out the bank's board.

But some Trump backers have long believed Garrett was a bad pick.

"Garrett was a lousy choice foisted on the president by people who clearly don't have his best interests in mind and use Trump to push their own narrow agenda," said Robert Wasinger, a former Trump campaign official.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 1:13:02 PM
Subject: Re: Definers

Jahan,

I spoke with our budget team yesterday. Because this would be a \$ 120,000 contract, we cannot move forward without going through a competitive bidding process. In addition, this cost is more than OPA's budget. In the past, we have solicited funds from the program offices to reduce the portion covered by OPA. Other offices have contributed in exchange for receiving the clips once a day.

I can start the process of soliciting funds and competing the contract. If you and Liz want me to proceed, I'll get a time estimate from our budget team.

Our contact at Definers has still not returned my request for a demo. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 8:50 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Beach, Christopher[beach.christopher@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wed 4/18/2018 1:45:01 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL: EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

gtg

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Wednesday, April 18, 2018 9:23 AM
To: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Beach, Christopher <beach.christopher@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

CNN: Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail. But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change. Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

The Huffington Post: EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard

practice since the Clinton administration.” In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted. Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt’s predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson’s secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush’s administration said the “arrangement is nothing new.”

Bloomberg BNA: EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements. The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater. “There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades,” David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In. Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

Houston Business Journal: EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites. The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release. The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The Hill: Trump’s EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent

months through a series of regulatory memos. The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions. Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

National News Highlights 4.18.18

The New York Times: Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday. Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders. The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet. Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

The Wall Street Journal: Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family. Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment. With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have

strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

The Associated Press: As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller. "We'll not be having this on the floor of the Senate," McConnell said on Fox News. His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it's simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to "poking the bear." The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer's office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is "an attack on our country" and is "corrupt."

TRUMP TWEETS

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/17/politics/scott-pruitt-epa-track-record/index.html>

Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

By Juana Summers, 4/18/18

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail.

But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change.

Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

Here are some of Pruitt's key changes:

Changing how the EPA approaches climate change

Like others in the Trump administration, Pruitt has repeatedly highlighted uncertainty about the role that humans have played in global warming, a view that is at odds with the vast majority of scientific evidence. Last month, the EPA circulated talking points instructing its staffers to say "clear gaps" exist in understanding whether human activity contributes to climate change. The EPA also removed references to climate change from several webpages, according to an analysis by the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative.

Rolling back car emissions standards

Pruitt announced in early April that he would revise Obama-era greenhouse gas emissions standards for automobiles, a move that undercut a signature part of Obama's efforts to fight climate change.

The weakening of automobile standards, which is a win for car manufacturers and a blow to environmentalists, also sets up a fight between the Trump administration and the state of California, which says it plans to stick with the stricter rules.

Proposing an overhaul of Obama-era initiatives on coal ash

In March, the EPA proposed changes to the Obama-era directive regulating coal ash waste, giving states and utilities more power to manage their own disposal of it. The proposal, according to The Washington Post, includes more than a dozen changes for how coal ash, which remains when coal is burned in power plants and electricity is generated, is stored at coal-fired power plants nationwide, and would let states change how frequently they test for groundwater contamination.

The decision was praised by industry officials who had called on Pruitt to revisit the rules, but environmental groups said he was caving to special interests in the coal industry.

Withdrawing regulations on 'major sources' of pollution

The EPA announced in January that it was withdrawing the "once-in always-in" policy under the Clean Air Act that dictated how major sources of hazardous air pollutants are regulated. The decades-old policy was opposed by fossil fuel companies, but environmental groups argued that its withdrawal would result in more pollution.

Suspending clean water rule

The EPA announced in January that it would suspend the Waters of the United States rule, which was designed to limit pollution in roughly 60% of the country's bodies of water. Critics said the rule was overly broad in classifying waterways that are subject to federal rules, while supporters see it as a necessary protection, for example, preventing fertilizer runoff from tainting streams and drinking water.

Withdrawing from Clean Power Plan

Pruitt announced in October his decision to withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, the Obama-era rule intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants across the country. The Clean Power Plan had a goal of decreasing the country's carbon pollution by roughly one-third by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Attempting to suspend an Obama-era methane rule

Under Pruitt, the EPA tried to suspend an Obama-era rule to restrict methane emissions from new oil and gas wells. But a federal court ruled in August that the EPA must enforce the Obama administration's regulation.

Pushing to withdraw the US from the Paris climate accord

Pruitt pushed the White House to leave the Paris climate deal, stood beside the President in the Rose Garden when he announced the decision and after the President spoke offered his own remarks. The move was condemned by global leaders and was seen by many as a setback to efforts to address global warming.

The Huffington Post

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/pruitt-emails-epa_us_5ad6701be4b03c426da92c1b

EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

By Alexander Kaufman, 4/17/18

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard practice since the Clinton administration."

In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted.

Pruitt's email accounts, revealed five days ago by The Washington Post, raised concerns that the EPA failed to disclose emails linked to the secret accounts in public records requests. The controversy added to the rapidly cascading series of corruption scandals and ethical lapses that have caused dozens of Democrats and at least three Republican members of Congress to call for his resignation.

Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

But that didn't quell concerns from Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), a staunch supporter of the Trump administration's environmental agenda, who asked the Pruitt to "affirm that the EPA does in fact search all your official email accounts when responding to FOIA requests" in a letter sent to the administrator Friday.

"During your confirmation hearing, I specifically asked you to 'refrain from taking any action — that makes it difficult or impossible for the public to access your official written communications under the Freedom of Information Act,' " Barrasso wrote to Pruitt, according to a transcript published by The Hill and The Washington Post. "You agreed to my request."

After the Government Accountability Office released a report Monday saying that the \$43,000 the EPA spent on a soundproof phone booth for Pruitt was illegal, Barrasso escalated pressure on the administrator by demanding that he "give a full public accounting of this expenditure and explain why the agency thinks it was complying with the law."

In a separate memo, Wilcox outlined the agency's defenses on the phone booth and another controversy involving five-figure raises given to EPA political appointees under the Safe Drinking Water Act after the White House rejected requests to bump their salaries. The latter scandal blew up two weeks ago when Pruitt struggled to defend himself during a surprisingly aggressive Fox News interview.

Bloomberg BNA

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-to-clarify-when-cities-can-blend-wastewater-1>

EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

By Amena Saiyid, 4/17/18

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater.

“There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades,” David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In.

Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

The EPA’s ban on the practice of blending was struck down in 2013 by a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit decision. Since that ruling, the EPA has chosen to apply the Iowa League of Cities v. EPA in the seven states where the court had jurisdiction, a move that caused much confusion among cities and counties.

The states within the Eighth Circuit’s jurisdiction are Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

“I am not a huge fan of trying to solve through guidance, so we will roll up our sleeves and do

rulemaking,” Ross said, adding to expect a proposal sometime this year.

Ross didn’t say whether the agency would apply the federal appellate ruling nationwide instead of on a case-by-case basis outside the Eighth Circuit. The EPA did acknowledge that it wants to provide regulatory certainty to wastewater facilities so they can “optimize” wastewater treatment during wet weather. That will protect both water quality and public health in the communities they serve.

“We are at the very start of the rulemaking process,” Andrew Sawyers, director of EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, told Bloomberg Environment on the sidelines of the session.

Sawyers said he didn’t want to get ahead of the agency by stating what direction the rulemaking would take. Rather, he emphasized that it would be crafted after engaging with the municipalities that have been affected by the EPA’s past policy.

Cautiously Hopeful

Water and wastewater utilities have been discussing the practice of blending with the EPA and state regulatory agencies for three decades, Rajendra Bhattarai, division manager for Austin Water Utility’s environmental and regulatory services, told Bloomberg Environment, adding the rulemaking has been a “long time” in the making.

Bhattarai said he hopes the EPA’s upcoming rule provides direction on when and how blending should be used.

“It should not be abused, but only be used when needed to avoid damaging the plant’s treatment systems, while protecting public health and environment,” Bhattarai said.

Likewise, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, which represents municipal-owned utilities, wants the EPA to provide clarity around wet weather treatment practices.

“We just don’t know enough about it yet or what they want to do,” Nathan Gardner-Andrews, the association’s chief advocacy officer, told Bloomberg Environment.

Houston Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2018/04/17/epa-removes-houston-area-waste-pits-from-list-of.html>

EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

By Olivia Pulsinelli, 4/17/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites.

The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release.

The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The companies initially opposed the cleanup plan that was approved in October, but they have now agreed to foot the \$115 million bill, per the Tribune. The plan includes installing engineering controls before excavating approximately 212,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated material for disposal, per the April 9 release. The remedial design is expected to take about 29 months, and International Paper Co. and MIMC will perform the design work under the oversight of the EPA and the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality. While the remedial design is underway, the U.S. Department of Justice and the EPA will begin negotiating

with the potential responsible parties regarding construction of the remedy, per the April 9 release.

Quarterly inspection and maintenance of the existing temporary cap will continue during the process, per the release.

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site consists of two sets of pits, called impoundments, built in the mid-1960s. They were used to dispose of solid and liquid pulp and paper mill wastes contaminated with dioxins and furans but were covered with an armored cap as a temporary containment method in 2011. The 14-acre northern set of impoundments is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, north of the Interstate 10 bridge, and is partially submerged. The southern impoundment covers less than 20 acres on a small peninsula south of the I-10 bridge.

The site was added to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites in 2008.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/383661-trumps-epa-quietly-revamps-rules-for-air-pollution>

Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

By Tim Cama, 4/18/18

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos.

The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions.

Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

“All of these, individually and taken together, will result in more air pollution and less enforcement of the Clean Air Act,” said Paul Billings, senior vice president for advocacy at the American Lung Association.

“These were radical departures of current law when they were proposed a decade ago and they’re just as radical today,” he said, referring to the Bush-era efforts, some of which were unsuccessful, to make changes to EPA air programs.

But for the EPA and its supporters, the memos simply bring the agency back to what the relevant laws and regulations are meant to be.

“They address specific concerns that people have had for years, and just make it much simpler for people to comply — especially for existing [facilities] — to make sure they can maintain their plants and replace worn-out components and those types of things, without the threat of enforcement litigation,” said Jeff Holmstead, a former head of the EPA’s air pollution office under the George W. Bush administration who now represents regulated companies at the law and lobbying firm Bracewell.

Bill Wehrum, head of the air office under EPA chief Scott Pruitt, wrote two of the three EPA memos. He recused himself from the third memo, which Pruitt wrote.

The first memo, issued in December, states that the EPA will no longer “second guess” companies’ calculations of their expected pollution output after certain big projects under what is known as New Source Review. Under that program, the EPA reviews the changes made to a facility to decide whether they need to go through the same process as if the facility were newly built.

The December memo effectively means the EPA will usually not take action against a company for its calculations if they turn out to be wrong.

The second memo, issued in January, repeals a Clinton-era policy known as “once in, always in.” Under the previous policy, facilities could never be considered “minor” sources of hazardous pollution if they were already considered “major” sources, and subject to much stricter rules.

Now, facilities can be regulated as “minor” if their emissions drop enough.

The third memo allows companies to use a procedure known as “project netting” when applying for permits for major projects under the New Source Review program. That means companies can use a more industry-friendly emissions calculation when they argue that a particular project would reduce emissions.

President Trump added to the memos last week, signing one himself that formally asks the EPA to use more industry-friendly practices in enforcing the National Ambient Air Quality Standards program, a key Clean Air Act program for air quality nationwide.

John Walke, director for clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the EPA is working to implement the policies the Bush administration failed to finish.

“I think Mr. Wehrum has decided this is likely a one-term administration and he’s going to devote his full resources to rolling back clean air, climate and public health protections in the time available to him,” Walke said.

“The most expedient and hasty way to accomplish those rollbacks is through the regular guidance documents that we have seen so far from EPA,” he said. “Rulemakings take time, they require public notice and input and hearings, and Mr. Wehrum and Mr. Pruitt plainly have no patience for those tedious foddors.”

Walke said that, taken together, the memos could allow polluting facilities to greatly increase their emissions.

The EPA didn't respond to requests for comment.

The focus among the memos for environmental and health advocates is the one repealing the "once in, always in" policy, and letting "major" pollution sources reduce their emissions and be regulated as "minor" ones.

A coalition of environmental groups sued the EPA to stop the policy change, arguing that it should have gone through the full regulatory process, including analysis of its environmental impact and an opportunity for public comment. Democratic states joined in with their own lawsuit.

"Instead of prioritizing the health of hard-working Americans, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt wants to let major polluters off the hook. That is unconscionable, and it is illegal," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D).

"If the 'Once In, Always In' policy is rescinded, children in California and around the country — particularly those who must live near the polluting plant or factory — may grow up in an environment with tons of additional hazardous pollutants in the air they breathe. California will not allow that to happen," Becerra said.

Two environmental groups opposed to the EPA's move have put out recent analyses of the change, focused on specific areas of the country.

The Environmental Integrity Project looked at 12 industrial plants in the Midwest and concluded they could increase their pollution to 540,000 pounds annually, a fourfold growth.

The Environmental Defense Fund looked at the Houston area, and said that 18 facilities there could increase their emissions to 900,000 pounds a year, two and a half times current levels.

Holmstead said opponents of the Trump administration's policy are unlikely to prevail. The Supreme Court ruled in the 2015 *Perez v. Mortgage Bankers Association* case that federal agencies can repeal policy memos with other policy memos and don't have to go through the full regulatory process to do so.

"I think the environmental groups are going to have a real uphill battle trying to get through court that this is somehow improper," he said. "That really does fly in the face of the *Perez* decision."

As for the increase in emissions, Holmstead said environmentalists are wrong. In many cases, the new policies will allow facilities to carry out projects that reduce emissions, or simply operate under a lower paperwork burden.

"They have yet to come up with any real-world examples of how that might happen," Holmstead said of the scenarios in which pollution might increase. "These reforms are not going to lead to pollution increases."

"I don't think that there will be a meaningful impact one way or another."

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/world/asia/trump-japan-north-korea-summit-talks.html>

Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

By Mark Lander and Matt Rosenberg, 4/17/18

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders.

The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet.

Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump also said he would give his blessing to North and South Korea to "discuss the end of the war" when the leaders of those countries meet this month, opening the door to a peace treaty that would replace the armistice that halted the Korean War in 1953.

His statements, which came as he welcomed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to his oceanfront estate here, were fresh evidence of a diplomatic thaw underway on the Korean Peninsula, and made a once-unthinkable encounter between him and Mr. Kim far more likely.

The president did not specify who in his administration was talking to North Korea, nor did he give any hint of the sites under consideration — adding to the aura of mystery that has enveloped this potential meeting. The Washington Post first reported Mr. Pompeo's trip, which took place over Easter.

But his comments could raise other thorny issues. A peace treaty with North Korea would greatly increase pressure to ease economic sanctions on the North and to withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula. It would also complicate the already tangled diplomacy in East Asia.

In his meeting with Mr. Abe, however, Mr. Trump projected optimism. He described North Korea in language worlds away from the speech he gave in November in Seoul, when he called it cruel and barbaric, “the results of a tragic experiment in a laboratory of history.”

“I really believe there’s a lot of good will,” Mr. Trump said. “They do respect us. We are respectful of them.”

He even suggested that the North and the South might announce some kind of deal before he met Mr. Kim.

On Tuesday, a South Korean newspaper, Munhwa Ilbo, reported that the two countries were negotiating an announcement “to ease military tensions and end a military confrontation,” as part of the summit meeting planned between Mr. Kim and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea.

That could involve pulling troops out of the Demilitarized Zone, making it a genuinely “Demilitarized Zone.” A South Korean government official later played down the report, saying it was too soon to tell what a joint statement by Mr. Moon and Mr. Kim would contain, other than broad and “abstract” statements about the need for North Korea to “denuclearize.”

But analysts said South Korea was aiming for a comprehensive deal, in which the North agreed to give up its weapons in return for a security guarantee, including a peace treaty. Mr. Trump’s comments suggested he backed that effort.

“They do have my blessing to discuss the end of the war,” he said. “People don’t realize that the Korean War has not ended. It’s going on right now. And they are discussing an end to war. Subject to a deal, they have my blessing.”

While Mr. Abe lavished praise on Mr. Trump for the sanctions campaign, which he said had brought North Korea to the table, he did not repeat the president’s words about an end to the Korean War.

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“Donald,” he said, “you’ve demonstrated your unwavering determination in addressing the challenge of North Korea.”

Mr. Abe said only that he hoped that the talks with Mr. Kim would force the North to address the threats posed by its nuclear and missile programs, as well as its abduction of Japanese citizens — a politically resonant issue in Japan that Mr. Trump promised to raise with Mr. Kim.

“Abe put on a surprisingly brave face,” said Michael J. Green, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who advised President George W. Bush on North Korea. “The president of the United States just endorsed a peace treaty with North Korea, a declared nuclear weapons state, and they offered nothing in return.”

China, which is a signer to the 1953 armistice, has long favored a peace treaty. But Japan, which did not sign it, is suspicious of one — as are some foreign policy experts in the United States, who point out that the North has yet to take any tangible steps to give up its nuclear arsenal.

The idea of a peace treaty is not new. The United States and North Korea discussed it in the 1990s and again in 2005. But it has never gone anywhere, largely because North Korea has reneged on pledges to give up its nuclear program.

Most scholars and officials agree that North and South Korea cannot themselves announce an end to the Korean War. It has to involve the United States and China as well, since both were signers to the armistice.

In welcoming Mr. Abe to his estate, Mar-a-Lago, for two days of meetings, Mr. Trump clearly hoped to change the subject from tampered documents, confiscated legal files and other symbols of the political storm clouds that hover over both leaders back home.

After days of ominous reports about his personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, and unflattering descriptions in a new book by James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he ousted, Mr. Trump appeared to savor the prospect of discussing trade and the nuclear threat from North Korea with Mr. Abe, whom he described in Twitter as a “truly fine gentleman.”

The stakes are even higher for Mr. Abe, whose political survival is in doubt after two domestic scandals have sapped his approval ratings and raised questions about whether he will be forced to resign.

Mr. Abe has invested heavily in his relationship with Mr. Trump, whom he first visited at Trump Tower even before he was sworn in. Preserving that relationship, in the face of fresh challenges in trade and from North Korea, could affect Mr. Abe’s standing in Japan.

The White House sought to put a good face on the meeting, describing Japan as a great ally of the United States and Mr. Abe as a friend of Mr. Trump. But officials acknowledged there would be differences over trade, with Mr. Trump pushing for a trade deal between the two countries and Mr. Abe stung by Mr. Trump’s decision not to exempt Japan, like other American allies, from sweeping tariffs on steel exports.

“We have certain disagreements with respect to some of the trading issues,” Larry Kudlow, Mr. Trump’s chief economic adviser, told reporters before the meeting. “We’ll iron those out, hopefully.”

Mr. Kudlow said he expected Mr. Abe to petition Mr. Trump to grant Japan an exemption, but declined to predict how he would respond. He also tamped down expectations about the United States rejoining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade pact, now anchored by Japan, which Mr. Trump pulled out of during his first week in office.

“We are in the pre-preliminary stages of any discussions,” he said. “It’s more of a thought than a policy.”

Having met six times — including once before at Mar-a-Lago — and spoken by phone 20 times, Mr. Trump and Mr. Abe were likely to talk about the issues dogging them at home, officials said. But American officials said they did not believe that would dominate their discussions.

“It’s all part and parcel of the relationship,” said Matthew Pottinger, the senior director for Asia at the National Security Council. “Sometimes they talk about the respective politics in each other’s countries. They enjoy talking about it.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/barbara-bush-dies-at-age-92-1524008885>

Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

By Gerald Seib, 4/17/18

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America’s most prominent political family.

Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family’s home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment.

With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation’s 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

Instead, the nation came to know her as the widely admired and humorous matron of a large and expanding extended family, which gathered regularly at its compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, for seemingly endless rounds of boating, fishing and golf.

She also proved more combative and less forgiving than her husband in challenging political foes or perceived press slights, and appeared more embittered by his loss in a re-election bid in 1992. When meeting her successor as first lady, Hillary Clinton, she pointed to the reporters watching them and declared: "Avoid this crowd like the plague. And if they quote you, make damn sure they heard you."

Barbara Bush, Former First Lady, Dies at Age 92

Former first lady Barbara Bush has died at the age of 92. She was the wife of 41st president George H.W. Bush, mother of 43rd president, George W. Bush, and 2016 candidate Jeb Bush. During and after her time in the White House she championed the cause of improving literacy rates among Americans. Photo: Reuters

After the Bushes left the White House, one of their children, George W. Bush, became governor of Texas and another, Jeb, became governor of Florida. She strongly supported both, as she did the candidacy of George W. Bush when he was elected president in 2000.

Ahead of Jeb Bush mounting his own, ultimately unsuccessful campaign for the presidency, Mrs. Bush didn't sound enthusiastic about seeing her family through political wars, famously declaring that "we've had enough Bushes" in the White House. Once he entered the 2016 race, however, she became a visible supporter.

Barbara Bush was born Barbara Pierce in 1925 and grew up in the suburban town of Rye, N.Y. Her father, Marvin, was a successful business executive who became president of McCall Corp.

She was attending a boarding school in South Carolina when, during a visit back home over Christmas break, she met her future husband, then a senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., at a dance. She was 16 years old. They became engaged a year and a half later.

World War II intervened to delay the wedding, however. Her fiancé went off to the Pacific as a U.S. Navy torpedo-bomber pilot, where he was shot down and rescued.

When he returned on leave, Barbara Pierce dropped out of Smith College, and they were married in 1945. Later, she recalled: “I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell my children that they just about throw up.”

After her husband graduated from Yale, the two moved to Texas, where he launched into the oil business and she managed a growing family. Tragedy struck when their daughter Robin, not yet four, died of leukemia. The loss led to a lifelong Bush family devotion to the cause of cancer research.

Her husband veered into politics and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, beginning a steady climb up the political ladder. He went on to become ambassador to the United Nations, envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice president and then president.

Throughout, Mrs. Bush was the crucial, supportive spouse. By her count, she managed some 30 moves by the Bush family.

After the biggest of those moves, into the White House, she said the nation came to see her as “everybody’s grandma,” and she enjoyed a burst of popularity. In a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll taken in early 1992, 70% of Americans said they had a positive view of her—25 points higher than those who had positive views of her husband.

When Mr. Bush was voted out of office, the couple retreated to their longtime home in Houston, while continuing their annual summer trips to Kennebunkport. She remained active in the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

She largely sought to stay out of the national political debate, though she emerged in 2016 to appear with her son Jeb in a joint interview with CBS News designed to promote his campaign.

In that, she offered him this typically pointed critique of his debate performances: “He’s almost too polite...If I gave him advice I would say ‘Why don’t you interrupt like the other people do?’” Then, without naming Donald Trump, she got in a dig at the man who ultimately prevailed in that campaign by comparing her son favorably to him: “He does not brag like some people we know.”

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/bfb5ad674cec4f90b75b5f790d30cb89/As-GOP-balks,-McConnell-shuts-down-bill-to-protect-Mueller>

As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 4/18/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller’s job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller.

“We’ll not be having this on the floor of the Senate,” McConnell said on Fox News.

His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it’s simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to “poking the bear.”

The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump’s 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer’s office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is “an attack on our country” and is “corrupt.”

Trump has also privately pondered firing Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is overseeing Mueller's investigation.

Within a day of Trump's criticism, Republicans Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina combined two bills they introduced last summer to protect special counsels. They introduced the new bill along with Democratic Sens. Chris Coons of Delaware and Cory Booker of New Jersey, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, announced that his committee would vote on the bill.

The legislation would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing, and would put into law existing Justice Department regulations that require a firing to be for "good cause."

Democrats immediately jumped on the legislation, but many Republicans have been cool to it.

At least three of the 11 GOP members of the Judiciary panel have said they will vote against it and another five have said they have questions about its constitutionality. Grassley is one of those with concerns, but said he felt obligated to hold a vote.

Republicans off the committee had questions too — and some acknowledged that it could be politically difficult.

South Dakota Sen. Mike Rounds said Tuesday that Trump should make the decision on his own and be responsible for the consequences.

"I think having Congress tell him what we believe he should do in this case is simply poking the bear, and I'd just prefer not to do that," Rounds said.

Oklahoma Sen. Jim Lankford said the bill is a “political distraction.”

“You create this whole constitutional political stir over something that is not going to happen,” he said.

Others said there was little point.

“It’s about as popular as cholera with the leader in the Senate and it’s about as popular as malaria in the House,” said Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a member of the Judiciary panel. “I think most people think we’re picking an unnecessary fight with the president.”

Coons bristled at the criticism that the legislation is unconstitutional, noting that several courts have upheld similar special counsel statutes.

“If I were convinced this were unconstitutional, I would not be moving it,” said Coons, a lawyer.

At a September hearing on the two separate bills, before they were combined, scholars were divided on whether the bills were constitutional, with some voicing concerns that allowing the judicial branch that authority over an executive decision may not pass muster in the courts.

“I think it’s probably unconstitutional and I don’t think there’s any realistic chance that the president will fire Mr. Mueller,” Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate and the former Texas attorney general, said Tuesday.

McConnell agreed, adding that Trump would never support the legislation.

“Just as a practical matter, even if we pass it, why would he sign it?” McConnell said in the Fox

interview.

Republicans who have talked to the White House almost uniformly have held the line that Trump will not fire Mueller or Rosenstein — including Tillis and Graham, who say they are pushing the legislation because it would be good policy under any president.

“I don’t think he’s going to fire Mueller, but I think institutionally it would be nice to have some protections,” Graham said Tuesday.

Tillis acknowledged last week that he had taken some “heat” from conservatives for the bill, but told the Judiciary panel, “this is really an opportunity to take an ethical stand, and not do it when the situation benefits you.”

Democrats said Republicans opposed to the legislation were simply protecting Trump.

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said the argument over constitutionality is a “red herring used by some of my colleagues as a pretext for opposing the bill, when they really have other reasons.” He gave no specifics.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said the special counsel bill is “so much more” than another policy debate.

“I think this will be one that history will judge us all,” Warner said.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!

15K 6.6K 26K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!

5.4K 12K 41K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

A sketch years later about a nonexistent man. A total con job, playing the Fake News Media for Fools (but they know it)!



Deplorably Scottish @ShennaFoxMusic

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

Oops! This is awkward!
@StormyDaniels's Ex 🤔
#IDTheThug

11K 7.7K 25K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

There is a Revolution going on in California. Soooo many Sanctuary areas want OUT of this ridiculous, crime infested & breeding concept. Jerry Brown is trying to back out of the National Guard at the Border, but the people of the State are not happy. Want Security & Safety NOW!

8.2K 11K 44K

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 10:05:23 PM
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Also confirming that you decline to comment on the specific questions in yellow below ...

From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:27 PM
To: 'Wilcox, Jahan' <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Again, we are willing to include the details of the similar spending under Lisa Jackson, but we don't have immediate access to EPA's records. Please provide the details of the spending to which you refer. Otherwise, we will be left to say we couldn't immediately verify the charge you claim. Could you at least provide the date, amount and contractor so we can try to check it out?

Also, just to clarify, is it your on-the-record contention that Pruitt in no way requested the bug sweep, but that this was an independent decision made solely by the EPA Protective Service Detail? Can you say concretely whether the administrator was even aware of the decision?

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:16 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Julie and Michael – below are the answers in bold.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Could you please clarify how electronic surveillance would potentially imperil Administrator Pruitt's physical security?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Also, we have not seen and, depending on the amount, don't have access to what was spent on a bug sweep under Lisa Jackson, but I'm interested in reporting that out. Can you provide the documentation on that, including the date, amount and the name of the vendor?

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in courier-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan

Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient. If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael



ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Have a tip for the Associated Press? We have a secure way to send it to us, anonymously. Follow this link for instructions: www.ap.org/tips

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- Mark Twain, 1906

“I go with Custer and will be at the death.” – AP reporter Mark Kellogg’s final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Mark Tapscott[mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 5/17/2017 5:54:21 PM
Subject: RE: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

RNC, NRSC, McConnell and even Sharron Angle, but it's my first run with an administration.

From: Mark Tapscott [mailto:mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 1:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

And I just ran across the fact you were an RNC spokesman a few years ago. I spent two years there as communications/publications director 81-82.

_Sent with Mailtrack

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 1:48 PM, Mark Tapscott <mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Norm Coleman, I always thought he was an interesting guy.
Did you know Matt Wolking with Rubio?

Thanks very much for the interview offer, I would very much like for that to happen. In the meantime, I'd like to sit down with you over a cup of coffee and hear more about your role.

I was a non-career SESer at OPM during Reagan's first term working for a Director (Donald Devine) who was a lightning rod like Pruitt. Believe me, I can appreciate the challenges you guys face.

_Sent with [Mailtrack](#)

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 1:42 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

That is awesome and we will work to get you in again – right now it's just a logistical thing, but will put it on our list.

I'm actually from Minnesota. Came out with Norm Coleman and recently worked on Rubio's presidential campaign and part of Joni's campaign in '14.

From: Mark Tapscott [mailto:mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]

Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 12:29 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

Thanks, Jahan. Are you, like your boss, an Okie? I was born and raised in Moore, graduated from OSU. I interviewed Mr. Pruitt when he AG and I was at the Washington Examiner.

_Sent with [Mailtrack](#)

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 12:21 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Mark –

Thank you very much, this is very helpful. Also I have really enjoyed working with Andrew and everyone at the Daily Caller. If there is anything we can do, please let me know and again thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Mark Tapscott [mailto:mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 12:17 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

I watched his conversation this morning on Fox and was elated to hear of the Superfund reforms he's implementing, especially because those reforms address problems we've reported on a great deal in recent months.

Here's just a small selection of links to some of our stories:

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/04/12/feds-leave-dangerously-polluted-superfund-sites-uncleaned-for-decades/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/12/18/epa-let-pollution-fester-at-302-sites-for-years-sometimes-decades/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/02/09/feds-ignored-contamination-for-decades-in-poor-neighborhood-superfund-site/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/05/22/epa-conducts-two-secret-meetings-a-year-to-decide-how-to-dole-out-billions-in-slush-fund-money/>

--

Mark Tapscott

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Proud member, First Amendment Center's National Freedom of Information Act Hall of Fame, Class of 2006

Corruption in government is a bipartisan problem. Exposing it is a trans-partisan obligation.

Ask me what happened at 9:15 am on the morning of March 1, 1991.

_Sent with Mailtrack

--

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Ask me what happened at 9:15 am on the morning of March 1, 1991.

To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS[AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Wed 1/17/2018 8:31:51 PM
Subject: News Clips - 17 January 2018

(Full stories, highlights, and details are listed further down in the email, and can be jumped to by clicking on any of the links below.)

[The Hill - Trump administration highlights 21 contaminated sites with business potential](#)

[Houston Chronicle - Site of former foundry in Houston's Fifth Ward among those EPA wants redeveloped](#)

[ABC News - EPA targets East Chicago, other contaminated Superfund sites for development](#)

[Wall Street Journal - How Donald Trump Has Remade the Rules for Business](#)

[E&E Energywire - Pruitt's EPA makes good on pledge to meet with oil and gas firms](#)

[NBC News - EPA eases path for new chemicals, raising fears of health hazards](#)

[E&E News - Pruitt credits MLK's legacy on environmental justice](#)

[Politico - States urge court to issue Clean Power Plan ruling](#)

[Washington Post - Fact-checking the Trump administration's claims on 'saving' coal country](#)

Reuters - California-Trump administration fuel-efficiency talks intensify

Washington Examiner - Democrats probe for weak spots among Trump administration contractors

BNA - Fuel Economy Target Set for March Release, NHTSA Head Says

E&E Greenwire - Marine base had problems years before EPA deal — documents

Daily Chronicle - D-428 replacing drinking fountains, sinks testing positive for lead

###

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/369336-trump-administration-highlights-21-contaminated-sites-with-business>

Trump administration highlights 21 contaminated sites with business potential

By Miranda Green, 1/17/18, 12:01 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency is highlighting 21 contaminated land sites across the country for their redevelopment and commercial potential.

The agency flagged notable Superfund sites in a list published Wednesday in an effort to direct "interested developers and potential owners" to what they call "formerly contaminated" sites.

Spots listed include the Allied Paper site on the Kalamazoo River in Missouri and Eagle Mine in Colorado.

The EPA lists the two among the sites with the "greatest expected" potential to be redeveloped in their communities. In its plan, the EPA says it will work to identify interested businesses and developers to reuse the Superfund sites.

"EPA is more than a collaborative partner to remediate the nation's most contaminated sites, we're also working to successfully integrate Superfund sites back into communities across the country," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement. "Today's redevelopment list incorporates Superfund sites ready to become catalysts for economic growth and revitalization."

The EPA came up with the list following a number of recommendations from the Superfund Task Force in 2017. The task force gave 42 recommendations to streamline and improve the Superfund program including expediting cleanup and remediation and engaging partners and stakeholders.

Pruitt has made cleaning up Superfund sites a pinnacle of his tenure even while the Trump administration works to cut funding and diminish positions at the EPA.

Yet Pruitt has also been critiqued for taking credit for cleaning up sites where the majority of remediation occurred under the previous administration.

An Associated Press analysis found that all seven of the sites that were partially or fully removed from the priorities list in 2017 were cleaned up before Pruitt took over the agency last year.

At the time, however, Pruitt appeared to take credit, saying in a statement, "We have made it a

priority to get these sites cleaned up faster and in the right way."

He added: "The Superfund program is carrying out the agency's mission of protecting human health and the environment more every day."

Houston Chronicle

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Houston-foundry-site-among-those-EPA-wants-to-see-12502157.php>

Site of former foundry in Houston's Fifth Ward among those EPA wants redeveloped

By Lise Olsen, 1/16/18, 4:00 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday it would recruit developers to help revamp a hand-picked selection of 31 old refineries, smelters and historically polluted lands formally designated for clean-up under a federal program reserved for the nation's worst toxic waste dumps.

On a list that the agency is billing as sites with the "greatest expected redevelopment and commercial potential" is a 35-acre property off Interstate 10 in Houston's east end that developers already have proposed cleaning up and turning into a housing complex for years despite its history of lead and arsenic contamination. The site housed a foundry known as Many Diversified Interests, or MDI, that released air pollution tainted with heavy metals from 1926 to 1992.

The property, located at 3617 Baer St. in Houston's Fifth Ward, became an EPA Superfund site in 1999 after studies confirmed that land and surrounding yards were contaminated with pollutants, including arsenic and lead. The EPA later removed soil from dozens of nearby properties.

After initial clean-up activities, the EPA has for years continued to monitor groundwater at the site, which is just east of Downtown Houston between Buffalo Bayou and Interstate 10. But in 2010, the EPA removed part of the property off of its National Priorities List in response to a developer's request for redevelopment. Over the years, the site has been an eyesore and a nuisance for local residents, who expressed no opposition to the redevelopment plan, the EPA said at the time.

In 2015, Houston Developer Frank Liu announced plans to help rehabilitate that site and eventually develop 538 homes there. Liu could not be reached Tuesday on the status of that project.

Other sites of the EPA's list with redevelopment potential include former chemical plants, refineries, mines and smelters once contaminated with toxic materials ranging from asbestos to arsenic and that stretch coast to coast from Charleston, S.C. to Portland, Oregon.

In a news release, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt promised that the EPA will be "more than a collaborative partner to remediate the nation's most contaminated sites, we're also working to successfully integrate Superfund sites back into communities across the country."

"Today's redevelopment list incorporates Superfund sites ready to become catalysts for economic growth and revitalization."

Other sites on federal rehab list are in small towns or rural areas. One of the best known rural Superfund sites tapped for its redevelopment potential is the so-called "Libby Groundwater Sites," located in an asbestos mining town in Montana.

The entire town of Libby became the focus of a federal study and clean-up after a Hearst newspaper investigation by reporter Andrew Schneider revealed residents there had been poisoned by haphazard disposal of asbestos mining waste.

Libby later turned into one of the nation's largest Superfund sites, though the groundwater sites

on the EPA's redevelopment list won its particular designation for the government clean-up program because of contamination by pollutants other than asbestos, said Celeste Monforton, a former federal government official who is familiar with the EPA's Libby investigations and is now a lecturer in public health at Texas State University. Monforton said she hoped the EPA would seek plenty of citizen input as it proceeds with its rehab plans.

In his press release, Pruitt promised to put a renewed focus on accelerating work and progress at all Superfund sites across the country – not just those on the list.

The list itself is intended to be dynamic – and sites will move on and off as appropriate, the EPA said.

ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/epa-targets-east-chicago-contaminated-superfund-sites-development/story?id=52380486>

EPA targets East Chicago, other contaminated Superfund sites for development

By Stephanie Ebbs, 1/17/18, 9:27 AM

Thirty-one of the country's most contaminated sites are likely to be available for building new housing, business or other development soon after they are cleaned up, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said today, a step that's part of Administrator Scott Pruitt's push to accelerate the cleanup and make the land available for community use.

Some of the so-called Superfund sites on the list have been considered too contaminated for use for decades and while today's announcement signals no immediate changes, it opens the door for companies that want to use the land in the future to start that process.

No development could happen until the areas are considered safe and removed from the EPA's list of contaminated sites.

There are nearly 1,200 sites on that list -- known as the Superfund National Priorities List, across the country -- that are managed by the EPA. The agency works with the companies considered responsible for the pollution and local governments to create a plan to clean up the sites and, in some cases, collect settlements used to pay for the cleanup.

Sites included on the list released today are considered good options for redevelopment in the foreseeable future based on location, access to transportation and interest from potential developers, according to the EPA news release.

At least one of the sites has been of particular interest to Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general and state senator. The site of a former lead smelter in East Chicago, Indiana, was the first Superfund site Pruitt visited as administrator before the EPA announced in December it was a site targeted for "intense, immediate cleanup action" to be overseen by the administrator directly.

Multiple areas in East Chicago were added to the Superfund list in 2009 after testing showed high levels of arsenic and lead in residential areas. Residents had to evacuate a housing complex in the area in 2016 because of the contamination and the complex is now set to be demolished, according to the Chicago Tribune.

The governor of Indiana issued a disaster declaration for the city to increase resources for the area and the mayor of East Chicago said the city would need more than \$56 million to deal with the contamination, the newspaper also reported.

"The City of East Chicago continues to have dialogue with the US EPA, and it believes that the Superfund site is quite viable for redevelopment given the continuing interest by companies to locate in East Chicago," Mayor Anthony Copeland said in a statement. "The city looks forward to continued work with the EPA in completing the remediation, which we feel should be completed to residential standards - the highest level of remediation, and promoting the development of the site."

The EPA lists reusing a former elementary school building on the site as one of the possibilities for the site.

Another example on the list is a Superfund site on the coast of Lake Washington and close to the practice facility for the Seattle Seahawks. It was contaminated by coal tar and creosote from manufacturing until 1969 and a cleanup plan is expected to be finalized in 2019.

The owner of the land wants to redevelop it for 10 buildings with retail and residential units, according to an EPA fact sheet.

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-donald-trump-has-remade-the-rules-for-business-1516190400?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=1>

How Donald Trump Has Remade the Rules for Business

1/17/18, 7:00 AM

The Trump administration in its first year has pushed for deregulation across industries. The effort has included high-profile actions, such as reversing Obama-era rules on internet traffic and power-plant emissions. But there have been hundreds of narrower steps as well, and in some cases the Republican Congress has reversed the previous administration's actions. The deregulatory moves are in various states of completion—some are done, some are proposed, and some proposals are still in the works. Here is a sampling of the major changes.

TECHNOLOGY / TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Net Neutrality: The Federal Communications Commission rolled back Obama-era rules requiring internet-service providers to treat all traffic on their networks equally.

Status: The FCC voted Dec. 14 to finalize the new rule. Court fights are likely.

Impact: Views on how providers will respond are varied. Many believe that in the next year or two they will start experimenting with bundled internet packages that deliver some content faster than others.

Privacy: Congress repealed an Obama-era FCC rule that would have required internet providers to get users' permission to use their data for some commercial purposes.

Status: Congress voted in March to roll back the rule.

Impact: Because the Obama rule would have made it harder for internet providers to get into the online advertising business, the rollback means consumers could see more ads from their providers.

Media Ownership: The FCC voted to reverse or revise several rules that restricted ownership of local media outlets, particularly TV stations.

Status: Latest FCC action was in November.

Impact: Opens the door to more consolidation in television markets.

TV Audience Cap: The FCC agreed to consider raising or eliminating the national audience cap for TV station groups, currently set at 39%.

Status: Pending—could be decided in 2018.

Impact: Greater consolidation likely in television, resulting in more supergroups of stations.

ENERGY

Clean Power Plan: The Environmental Protection Agency withdrew an Obama-era rule requiring reduced carbon emissions from coal-burning power plants, and plans to replace it with a less-stringent one.

Status: Obama rule being withdrawn. EPA has started working on a new rule.

Impact: A replacement rule is likely to give more power to states and limit federal oversight to pollution controls at individual plants.

Methane Emissions: The Interior Department attempted to delay indefinitely a rule that set stricter standards on oil and gas wells' emissions of methane gas, a contributor to climate change. After a California court ruled against the effort, the department issued a rule delaying certain requirements, such as those for the way gas is captured and measured.

Status: In process—the Interior Department has delayed compliance for some requirements while it works on a new rule.

Impact: In light of the uncertainty, oil-and-gas companies are working on their own to contain more methane released by natural-gas production.

Offshore Drilling Well Control: The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement is expected to relax safety rules adopted after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon accident, including striking a provision requiring that third-party inspectors of critical equipment be certified by the agency.

Status: Expected—proposal is under review by the White House.

Impact: Relaxing or eliminating some requirements puts more responsibility for safety in the hands of private industry.

Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal Lands: The Interior Department withdrew a 2015 rule that required disclosure of chemicals and other details of fracking operations on federal lands.

Status: Completed on Dec. 29.

Impact: Fracking on federal lands will still be subject to oversight by states, with rules that may vary from state to state.

ENVIRONMENT

Waters of the U.S.: President Donald Trump asked the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers in February to propose a rule to replace one issued under the Obama administration to clarify which waterways are protected by the Clean Water Act. The Obama-era rule classified tributaries as protected. The rule was challenged in court and Mr. Trump said the new rule should apply to “navigable waters” as outlined in a 2006 Supreme Court opinion by Justice Antonin Scalia.

Status: In process—a new rule is expected.

Impact: A narrower rule would make it easier for property developers and manufacturers to build and operate in areas that include these tributaries. It could also make it more difficult to monitor and regulate pollutants that enter the water system through these smaller waterways.

Endangered Species: The Fish and Wildlife Service withdrew more than 20 designations of critical habitat for endangered and threatened wildlife and plants, including one that would prevent drilling in key habitat of a Western bird called the greater sage grouse. In the case of the sage grouse, a new voluntary standard has been proposed.

Status: Completed.

Impact: Opens up areas to development that would have either been off-limits or required accommodation for the endangered species.

CHEMICALS

Toxic Substances Control: The EPA narrowed the scope of risk evaluations for a legislatively mandated overhaul of how potentially dangerous chemicals are regulated.

Status: Completed. The EPA has started process of evaluations using the narrower interpretation.

Impact: Some older uses of chemicals won't be evaluated for potential health and environmental issues.

Pesticide Ban: The EPA in April overturned a proposed ban on the use of the insecticide chlorpyrifos—which has been shown to cause brain damage in children—on food crops.

Status: Done

Impact: Manufacturers will save the cost of removing the chemical from their products. Health groups are concerned about the effects on children.

LABOR

Wage Reporting: The Office of Management and Budget suspended a rule from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that would have required wage reporting broken down by ethnicity and gender, saying it was too costly to companies.

Status: Done—suspended indefinitely in August.

Impact: Companies are saved the additional paperwork and cost. The government doesn't produce data that could allow for deeper study into wage differences between men and women and different racial groups.

Overtime Pay: The Labor Department has begun the process of rewriting overtime regulations. The salary level under which most workers are automatically eligible for overtime pay, \$23,600 a year, hasn't been changed since 2004. The Obama administration had sought to increase the level to \$47,476 a year, but a federal court in Texas halted the revised rule from going into effect in late 2016. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta indicated he supports a smaller increase than his predecessor backed.

Status: In process

Impact: During the prior administration, the Labor Department estimated that 4.2 million more workers would be eligible for overtime pay under the higher threshold.

Tips: The Labor Department is working to undo an Obama-era rule that prohibited employers from requiring restaurant servers and other workers who receive tips to share that money with nontipped colleagues.

Status: Expected—proposed rule issued.

Impact: Will allow restaurants and other companies with tipped workers to spread out gratuities between tipped and nontipped staff, such as cooks, potentially allowing firms to offer lower base pay to more workers.

Joint Employers: The National Labor Relations Board overturned an Obama-era ruling and narrowed the definition of when a worker could be considered jointly employed by two firms.

Status: Done.

Impact: The narrower definition makes it harder for contractors or workers at franchises to organize into unions and bargain with larger corporations because they are viewed as employees only of smaller firms.

EDUCATION

Transgender Bathrooms: The education secretary withdrew guidance from the Obama administration that had said schools should allow transgender students to use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity.

Status: Done—rescinded on Feb. 22.

Impact: Schools can require students to use the bathroom that corresponds with their gender at birth.

Campus Sexual-Assault Complaints: The education secretary withdrew guidance from the Obama administration that had lowered the minimal standard for proof of sexual assault needed to discipline students.

Status: Done—rescinded, with interim replacement guidelines announced Sept 22. New, more permanent rules, are expected in March.

Impact: Schools can now use a standard of “clear and convincing” evidence of assault, a higher bar than the “preponderance” of evidence required by the Obama administration.

School Accountability: Congress rescinded a rule that required public schools to establish accountability systems to judge school quality and student success.

Status: Done—rescinded March 27.

Impact: Gives states more latitude on how to determine the success of schools and students.

Student-Loan Protections: The Education Department withdrew a rule that aimed to forgive student debt for borrowers who alleged they were defrauded by schools, particularly for-profit colleges. A draft proposal released by the Education Department for public discussion would make it tougher for borrowers to qualify for debt forgiveness and would take into account borrowers’ after-school earnings to determine damages.

Status: In process—the Education Department is negotiating with stakeholders—including schools and student advocates—on a new rule.

Impact: Could limit the number of students who can claim loan forgiveness because of fraud.

Trade School Accountability: The Education Department withdrew rules, known as “gainful employment,” designed to punish colleges that teach trade programs if a large share of their alumni end up with high student-debt burdens relative to their earnings.

Status: In process—the government this spring plans to hold talks with schools, student groups and others on drafting a new rule.

Impact: Delays potential sanctions for trade schools affected.

BANKING / FINANCE

Leveraged Loans: Banking supervisors are reconsidering guidelines that were the basis for a crackdown on so-called leveraged loans to heavily indebted companies.

Status: Expected—no draft of proposed changes has been published yet.

Impact: Gives more leeway for banks to finance private-equity buyouts and other big-ticket deals.

Volcker Rule: Wall Street regulators are drafting changes to the rule that restricts banks from speculative trading unless it is done on their customers' behalf.

Status: Expected—no draft of proposed changes has been published yet.

Impact: Cuts millions of dollars in regulatory costs for Wall Street banks and allows them to engage in a broader range of trades and investments.

Arbitration Rule: Congress reversed a rule completed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau under Obama-era leadership that would have made it easier for consumers to bring class-action lawsuits against banks by restricting requirements that customers use arbitration to resolve disputes.

Status: Completed—President Trump in November signed into law the resolution scrapping the rule.

Impact: Banks can more easily include arbitration requirements in their contracts for consumer-financial products and services.

Brokers' Conflicts of Interest: The Securities and Exchange Commission is expected to propose new conflict-of-interest restrictions on stockbrokers advising individual investors, a step toward creating consistent federal standards for all brokerage accounts. The Labor Department, meanwhile, is reconsidering Obama-era rules that applied to retirement accounts.

Status: In process—SEC proposal expected by the second quarter. Labor's rules have been partially delayed into 2019.

Impact: Uncertain. It depends on whether the SEC requires brokers to simply disclose certain conflicts or opts for Labor's stricter approach, which makes it harder for brokers to sell products that earn them higher commissions.

Community Reinvestment Act: Banking supervisors and the Treasury Department are planning to revise decades-old rules that mandate bank lending to poor borrowers.

Status: Expected—no draft of proposed changes has been published yet.

Impact: Could transform how banks make billions of dollars in loans, investments and donations to poorer customers.

AGRICULTURE

Farmer Fair Practice Rule: President Trump froze the implementation of a rule when he took office that said contract poultry and livestock farmers would be able to sue dealers without having to prove that a practice harmed the entire industry; they would just have to show harm to their specific business. The Agriculture Department withdrew the rule in October.

Status: Done

Impact: Maintains the older system in which it is difficult for contract livestock farmers to sue the dealers who buy their animals.

Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices: The Agriculture Department is reconsidering a rule that would have required livestock and poultry labeled as organic to abide by stricter animal-welfare practices.

Status: In process—proposed rule has been delayed while being re-evaluated.

Impact: Keeps a looser standard for livestock and poultry to be classified as organic.

School Lunches: The Agriculture Department in May relaxed Obama-era restrictions on school lunches that banned chocolate milk unless it was nonfat and required whole grains and lower salt levels.

Status: Done—an interim rule with more flexible standards is currently in place.

Impact: School districts have more discretion in deciding the makeup of school lunches.

AIRLINES

Baggage Fees: The Transportation Department has withdrawn a proposed Obama rule that would have required airlines to disclose baggage fees to consumers along with fare and schedule information.

Status: Done—withdrawn Dec 7.

Impact: Consumers may discover that there are baggage fees they were unaware of.

AUTOMOTIVE

Fuel Economy: The Trump administration in March initiated a new review of Obama-era fuel-economy standards, opening the door to a potential rollback of stringent emissions rules because of low consumer demand for smaller cars and electric vehicles.

Status: Under review—decision on rules expected in the first half of 2018.

Impact: Auto makers wouldn't have to invest as heavily in fuel-efficient technologies, such as electric vehicles.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Exposure to Beryllium: The Labor Department froze an Obama-era rule that would have tightened standards for workplace exposure to beryllium, a lightweight metal used in manufacturing that is dangerous both if inhaled via dust or fumes, or if it comes in contact with the skin. The department has proposed a replacement that excludes construction and shipyard sectors.

Status: In process—new rule proposed June 27.

Impact: Saves on compliance costs for shipyard and construction companies that use coal slag, which contains trace amounts of beryllium.

HEALTH CARE

Association Health Plans: The Trump administration plans to loosen restrictions on health-insurance policies crafted by associations.

Status: In process—proposed rule released Jan. 4.

Impact: Small businesses and self-employed people could form associations and buy health-insurance plans that don't comply with all Affordable Care Act benefit requirements.

Short-Term Insurance: President Trump signed an executive order calling for the relaxation of restrictions on short-term insurance plans, which can be cheaper but also less comprehensive. The Obama administration limited those policies to less than three months, with no ability to renew after that time, because of concerns they were siphoning off healthier consumers from the ACA marketplaces.

Status: Expected—proposed rule not yet released.

Impact: Could open the way for consumers to buy these plans for longer periods.

State Funding for Abortion Providers: Congress repealed a rule that prevented states from blocking funding for family-planning clinics that provide abortions.

Status: Done—rescinded April 13.

Impact: Gives states more discretion on funding, and adds to disparity among states on abortion access and regulations.

HOUSING

Housing Diversity: The Department of Housing and Urban Development pushed back the deadline for local governments to submit plans to combat housing segregation. HUD Secretary Ben Carson has said he wants to reinterpret the rule.

Status: In process—requirements suspended until 2020.

Impact: May save cities costs associated with complying with the rule. May mean fewer affordable housing units or rezoning that would have been used to meet the rule.

Floodplain Housing Rules: President Trump withdrew an Obama-era rule that would have required infrastructure projects in floodplains to include extra protection against flooding.

Status: Done—Mr. Trump withdrew the rule in August.

Impact: Builders won't face permitting delays that had been expected with the Obama rule. Long term, any flooding in areas where these projects go up may cause more damage.

E&E Energywire

<https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2018/01/17/stories/1060071135>

Pruitt's EPA makes good on pledge to meet with oil and gas firms

By Mike Soraghan, 1/17/18

U.S. EPA is holding a roundtable with oil and gas industry leaders next week to hear complaints about regulation and enforcement.

A few environmental groups have also been invited, but the meeting grew out of complaints to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt that the agency's enforcement was too aggressive, particularly in the Rocky Mountain West.

The meeting is to take place Tuesday at the agency's Region 8 headquarters in Denver. Pruitt is not expected to attend. The session is to be led by Kenneth Wagner, a former law and business partner of Pruitt, who is now in charge of outreach to states.

Several industry groups, including the Colorado Oil and Gas Association and the North Dakota Petroleum Council, laid out their concerns in letters to Pruitt last spring.

Pruitt responded in July with a letter that promised more "judicious" use of the enforcement process they'd complained about, better cooperation with states and a meeting on enforcement.

"We plan to convene a roundtable with representatives of the oil and gas sector and state regulatory agencies to discuss industry concerns and enhance communication while ensuring safe and responsible domestic oil and gas production," Pruitt wrote in a letter obtained by E&E News and first reported in The New York Times.

Many of their complaints were focused on enforcement by Region 8. But the meeting has broadened to include a national perspective.

In addition to oil and gas trade groups, attendees are to include the Groundwater Protection

Council, a nonprofit group for state water quality regulators; Clean Water Action; the Environmental Defense Fund; and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Association (COGA) sent a letter to Pruitt last year complaining about an EPA Clean Air Act enforcement campaign that started in 2013 under the Obama administration. In the letter, COGA President and CEO Dan Haley said President Trump's executive order on "energy dominance" required suspending the enforcement campaign until it was reviewed by the new administration. He also noted that Pruitt and other Trump administration officials have supported returning regulatory power to state governments.

"COGA is merely asking that EPA discontinue its targeted enforcement campaign and return to the principle of 'cooperative federalism,'" Haley wrote in the letter, provided to E&E News by COGA.

The enforcement effort involved extensive use of information requests commonly referred to as "114 letters," after a section of the Clean Air Act, and spread to Texas and North Dakota.

A letter from the North Dakota Petroleum Council in March of last year said that fulfilling such requests "can take easily six months and hundreds of man-hours."

Two of the information requests sent out in 2016 involved North Dakota oil well sites where workers died from toxic vapors (Energywire, May 30, 2017). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has cited such toxic vapors as possibly contributing to at least nine oil worker deaths.

While President Obama was in office, EPA's Republican and industry critics used the term "sue and settle" to accuse the agency of colluding with litigious environmental groups to toughen up regulatory enforcement. With a new directive in October, Pruitt promised to end EPA regulatory enforcement associated with "sue and settle" cases (Greenwire, Oct. 16, 2017).

The petroleum council said that North Dakota officials declined to sign on to a consent decree in its state because of the onerous terms demanded by EPA. A separate Colorado settlement

criticized as "sue and settle" was with Noble Energy Inc., and also involved violations caused by emissions from oil storage tanks.

Noble paid a \$5 million civil penalty and agreed to spend about \$60 million on system upgrades, monitoring and inspections to reduce emissions. It also agreed to pay \$4.5 million to fund environmental mitigation projects and \$4 million on supplemental environmental projects. Colorado got \$1.5 million of Noble's civil penalty.

Noble also agreed to reduce or eliminate the opening of "thief hatches" by truck drivers during sampling, which allows petroleum vapors to escape. Two of the nine toxic vapor deaths cited by NIOSH were at Noble well sites.

NBC News

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/epa-eases-path-new-chemicals-raising-fears-health-hazards-n838201>

EPA eases path for new chemicals, raising fears of health hazards

By Suzy Khimm, 1/17/18, 8:32 AM

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency is shifting course under the Trump administration on how it assesses new chemicals for health and environmental hazards, streamlining a safety review process that industry leaders say is too slow and cumbersome.

But some former EPA officials, as well as experts and advocates, say the agency is skipping vital steps that protect the public from hazardous chemicals that consumers have never used before, undermining new laws and regulations that Congress passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2016.

According to these critics, that could mean that manufacturers might get approval to introduce a new chemical for one purpose, without getting a thorough, timely review of the chemical's safety if it is later used for a different purpose. Asbestos, for example, was commonly used in building insulation before the EPA cracked down on its use, but the carcinogenic chemical is still found in brake pads for automobiles — posing hazards for garage mechanics — and is widely used to manufacture chlorine.

In recent months, the EPA has quietly overhauled its process for determining whether new chemicals — used in everything from household cleaners and industrial manufacturing to children's toys — pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. Among other changes, the agency will no longer require that manufacturers who want to produce new, potentially hazardous chemicals sign legal agreements that restrict their use under certain conditions.

Such agreements, known as consent orders, will still be required if the EPA believes that the manufacturer's intended use for a new chemical poses a risk to the public health and the environment. But the agency won't require consent orders when it believes there are risks associated with "reasonably foreseen" uses of the new chemical — ones that go beyond what a manufacturer says it's intending to do, but which the agency believes are reasonable to anticipate in the future.

Instead the EPA will rely on a broader measure, known as significant new-use rules, to regulate chemicals that are likely to pose a risk if they're used for a different purpose. The agency typically has to issue these rules whenever they want to restrict the broad use of potentially hazardous chemicals, since consent orders apply only to a single manufacturer.

Eliminating consent orders in these cases would be "more efficient," said Jeff Morris, director of the EPA's toxics program. He laid out the agency's shift to significant new use rules at a public meeting in early December: "It's our belief that they could be equally protective but eliminate this one step."

Chemical industry lobbyists had pushed for the change, arguing that the EPA's rising use of consent orders was unwarranted. Chemical manufacturers "are burdened by the delay of waiting for EPA to draft the orders, negotiating them with EPA, and then waiting for EPA to issue the orders," the American Chemistry Council, the industry's largest trade association, told the agency days before President Donald Trump took office.

But consumer advocates, along with some former agency officials and research experts, believe that EPA's moves are sabotaging a safety review process that Congress had taken great pains to bolster. Richard Denison of the Environmental Defense Fund, an advocacy group, points out that the 2016 law requires the EPA to assess the broad use of chemicals because manufacturers frequently find different uses for hazardous substances over time, as in the use of asbestos.

"EPA is explicitly disavowing and downplaying a tool that's really been a cornerstone of new chemical regulation," said Bob Sussman, a former EPA attorney under Obama and counsel for the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition, which represents environmental and public health advocates. "We believe EPA is taking a big step backward in the protection of health and the environment without an offsetting benefit."

'Playing a dangerous game'

Under EPA administrator Scott Pruitt's leadership, the agency has taken major industry-friendly steps to loosen its regulation of legacy chemicals. Last year, the EPA delayed bans on chemicals already in widespread use, including a lethal substance in paint strippers and a pesticide linked to developmental disabilities in children.

But the agency is also overhauling its process of reviewing new, unproven chemicals that have yet to hit the marketplace. The changes come in the wake of intense lobbying by the chemical industry, which complained that the EPA was taking too long to clear innovative new products for commercial use that the industry considered safe.

"We were very concerned as an industry — that was one of our top priorities when I talked to the administration," said Robert Helminiak, a lobbyist for the Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates, who met with Pruitt last year.

When the Trump administration took office, the EPA was facing a serious backlog of new chemicals awaiting safety reviews. About 600 cases had piled up after Congress approved the sweeping reforms to the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which passed in June 2016 after decades of deliberation and was called the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, after the Democratic senator from New Jersey.

For the first time, the EPA under the act was required to make an explicit determination that a new chemical was safe before it could be sold to consumers, using stricter criteria to evaluate their health and environmental risks. The new law also required the EPA to evaluate the risks of chemicals already in commercial use, by specific deadlines.

At the urging of industry, Pruitt promised to expedite the post-Lautenberg review process for new chemicals “to make the process faster and more efficient, while ensuring chemical safety.” With great fanfare, he announced the EPA had cleared its backlog in August and unveiled its early reforms to the safety review process.

But some public-health experts and former officials say that the EPA's efforts to streamline the program are undermining its newly expanded authority to require testing when it believes there is insufficient data, or when future uses may pose a risk.

“What I’m observing is an effort by the agency and also some in the industry to turn back the clock and behave as though the Lautenberg Act was never passed in the first place,” said Lynn Goldman, dean of George Washington University’s school of public health and a former EPA official under Clinton. “The agency has been granted more authority to do testing, then it put hands in its pockets and said it doesn’t want to use this authority.”

Critics say there’s a big difference between the consent orders they want the EPA to issue and the agency’s proposed alternative. Consent orders often include mandatory testing of new chemicals for potential health and environmental hazards. By contrast, significant new-use rules typically don’t require testing, though they can recommend that it should happen in the future if a manufacturer wants to use a restricted chemical.

At that point, however, the harm may have already been done, says Veena Singla, an environmental health researcher at the University of California, San Francisco. “Chemicals do end up being used for many different applications than what the manufacturer originally thought or intended,” she said. “After the fact, we’ve seen what the problem is: The chemical is out there.”

The Trump administration says that its safety reviews will be just as robust under its changes to the program. If a manufacturer wants to use a chemical for a new purpose that might be risky — say, by putting the substance in water — it's still legally required to seek the EPA's approval if there are significant new-use restrictions in place. The EPA can then mandate more testing at that point, said Morris: "The end result is that there would be the same amount of testing."

But public-health advocates say there's no guarantee that the EPA will require the same testing further down the line, arguing that consent orders provide far more assurance that the agency is properly scrutinizing toxic substances. They now fear that the EPA will go even further to relax the law: The agency is currently deciding whether it will allow manufacturers to commercialize new chemicals while it is still hammering out the rules restricting future, reasonably foreseen uses — something that industry groups are currently pushing for.

If the EPA lets these chemicals on the marketplace early, then it will be "blatantly violating the law" that Congress passed to tighten these safety reviews, said Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., who co-authored the Lautenberg Act and help push it into law after Lautenberg's death in 2013.

The new law requires the EPA "to review the safety of all uses of a new, and potentially dangerous, chemical before allowing it to be sold to consumers, not just selective uses," said Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., the top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. If the agency allows a chemical to be sold before putting all its restrictions into place, that "contradicts the spirit and letter of the law," he added.

"This may please Pruitt's corporate allies, but it is playing a dangerous game, with the safety of millions of Americans at stake," Udall said.

'Regrettable substitutions'

Consumer advocates say that it's critical for the EPA to be aggressive about putting the 2016 law into effect, given the agency's past failures to protect the public from toxic chemicals.

Older flame retardants linked to cancer were phased out in the 1970s, only to be replaced by new flame retardants that were also linked to cancer, hormone disruption and development problems,

despite passing the EPA's safety review process.

Other “regrettable substitutions” include BPA, which was intended to be a safe replacement for bisphenol-S; and GenX, a substitute for a carcinogenic substance used to make Teflon, only to be later linked to cancer as well. Right before Trump took office, the federal government agreed to pay more than \$2 billion to veterans who developed leukemia, liver cancer and Parkinson's disease after exposure to GenX-contaminated water at a North Carolina military base.

Such horror stories helped build broad bipartisan support for the 2016 overhaul, which Congress passed on a nearly unanimous vote. Under the old regime, the EPA didn't have to sign off on new chemicals if it concluded that they were likely to be safe. If the manufacturer never heard anything from the agency within 90 days, it could go ahead and start making its new product. Under the new law, the EPA has to make an affirmative decision that a new chemical is safe before it can be commercialized — the crux of its new safety review process.

Getting to market sooner

The chemical industry, however, insists that the 2016 overhaul was never intended to make radical reforms across the board. The new law “really doesn't do very much for new chemicals — the process was the part of TSCA that was really working pretty well,” Helminiak said.

Before the EPA had unveiled its Trump-era changes, industry groups argued that the agency was taking a needlessly draconian approach toward new chemicals reviews, requiring consent orders where none were necessary. When a manufacturer wants the EPA to approve a new chemical, it describes its intended use for the substance. So the EPA “accomplishes nothing useful” by subjecting them to consent orders for other purposes they have no intention of pursuing, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) said in January. Instead, it would simply burden manufacturers with onerous testing requirements and other conditions that make it harder for them to sell innovative new products, industry groups said.

The EPA's new approach is likely to reduce the testing that manufacturers who first bring these new chemicals to market are required to do. Using significant new-use rules (SNURs) “reduces the testing that the EPA is seeking to impose, because testing is rarely required in a SNUR,” said Richard Engler, a former EPA scientist who now works for Bergeson & Campbell, a law firm that represents chemical manufacturers. “If someone is of the view that every consent order should have testing in it, then yes, switching to SNURs is going to produce less data,” Engler

said, though he believes EPA's new approach will be just as protective.

But industry groups say the agency still hasn't gone far enough to speed up the safety review process, warning that the latest reforms could bring their own delays.

Significant new-use rules can take far longer to finalize than consent orders, since they are regulations subject to a public notice and comment period. If the EPA determines that a new chemical is safe for its intended use, a manufacturer should be able to start making and selling that product immediately, without waiting for the EPA to finalize its new rules for separate, reasonably foreseeable uses, said the ACC's Michael Walls: "There's got to be a way to get to market earlier."

Denison of the Environmental Defense Fund warns the EPA against giving the green light too early. Even if a company sticks to the use of a chemical that the agency has deemed safe, it can't predict what other parties might do with it once it's on the market, said Denison: "Companies say they can't control how chemicals are being used."

'This EPA has worked very well with industry'

The EPA says that it's still deliberating how long manufacturers will have to wait to bring their new chemicals to market. "This is an area that we are discussing," Morris said in December.

Consumer advocates fear the EPA will ultimately heed industry's call. Under the new administration, industry heavyweights have been able to appeal directly to their former colleagues: Trump appointee Nancy Beck, a former senior executive at the ACC, is now a top deputy for the EPA's chemical safety office. Trump's nominee to lead the office, Michael Dourson, spent decades conducting industry-friendly research for the ACC and Dow Chemical, among others. He worked as a senior EPA adviser for months before withdrawing his nomination in December, under fire for his industry ties.

In recent months, the agency has worked closely with the ACC to revamp the paperwork that manufacturers must submit to get new chemicals approved. With the group's help, the EPA consulted three industry giants — Dow Chemical, Procter & Gamble, and the BASF Corporation — to revise its new chemical application process.

“It’s always important to get feedback from companies using the document,” David Tobias, an EPA scientist, said at the agency’s December meeting. “We’ve already made some changes based on this consultation.” (The EPA declined to specify the changes it’s made and said it is working with “a variety of stakeholders” on the new chemicals program.)

Industry groups say they’re hardly getting a free pass: From their perspective, the EPA hasn’t hesitated to tighten its scrutiny of new chemicals, placing more stringent restrictions on their use and expanding the scope of their reviews. But they acknowledge that Pruitt’s EPA has been receptive to their concerns.

“This EPA has worked very well with industry,” Helminiak said. “They really have certainly listened to what the specialty chemical industry has to say.”

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060071099/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt credits MLK's legacy on environmental justice

By Kevin Bogardus, 1/16/18

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has asked agency employees to attend an EPA event tomorrow to celebrate civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr.

In an internal email obtained by E&E News, Pruitt invited EPA employees to join him and a panel of their colleagues at the agency's MLK event tomorrow morning.

Pruitt said in his email that "we honor" King's record of service.

"Dr. King was the primary spokesperson for nonviolent activism related to our country's civil rights movement of the 1960s, and we commemorate his vision and legacy of service," said the EPA chief.

Pruitt also thanked EPA employees who took part in community service on the King holiday earlier this week.

"I know that there is a strong ethic of community service within the EPA family and thank all of you who ... participated in service projects in your hometowns across the country," he said in the email.

The EPA administrator also credited King's legacy for helping to create the environmental justice movement.

"Dr. King's legacy also provides the roots for the environmental justice movement, ensuring the rights to a clean and healthy environment for all of our citizens," Pruitt said.

Environmental justice has followed a complicated path so far at Pruitt's EPA.

Under President Trump's fiscal 2018 budget proposal, funds for the agency's environmental justice office would be eliminated. That office was also reorganized last year into EPA's powerful policy office, which agency officials contend will enhance EPA's ability to incorporate environmental justice concerns into its regulations but critics warn could lead to politics becoming part of the office's programs (Greenwire, Sept. 7, 2017).

Pruitt himself has taken note of environmental justice before. Last month, he held a meeting with members of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, according to his Twitter feed.

In his email today, Pruitt quoted from King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, saying his refrain of "let freedom ring" has "particular meaning as we at EPA work with our state partners to protect public health and the environment across the United States."

"Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi," Pruitt said in the email, quoting King. "Let freedom ring."

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/01/states-urge-court-to-issue-clean-power-plan-ruling-406315>

States urge court to issue Clean Power Plan ruling

By Alex Guillen, 1/17/18, 1:17 PM

A coalition of states that support the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan urged the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today to issue its ruling on the underlying rule, saying the Trump EPA's plan to repeal and replace the controversial regulation will take too long.

The requests comes after EPA asked the court last week to keep the lawsuit on hold indefinitely, "pending the conclusion of rulemaking."

"Neither EPA's proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan nor its prolonged and uncertain plans to replace the rule justify additional abeyance," the states wrote in their filing today. They argued that the newly extended comment period on the advance notice seeking ideas on how to regulate carbon dioxide more narrowly "means it is unlikely that the agency will complete repeal until late 2018 at the earliest, more than two years after en banc argument in this case."

Any challenge to that repeal, the states added, would touch on all the same legal arguments made in the original challenge to the Clean Power Plan — meaning issuing the ruling on the underlying Clean Power Plan would serve “judicial economy” by avoiding rehashing old legal arguments in a new case.

Environmental groups made a similar request last year, but the court continued to keep the lawsuit on hold.

WHAT’S NEXT: The court will decide whether to put the lawsuit on hold once again. It has previously done so only for limited periods, although the practical effect has been a long-term pause in the proceedings. There is no timeline for the court to decide.

Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2018/01/16/fact-checking-the-trump-administrations-claims-on-saving-coal-country/?utm_term=.f5ef9203c955

Fact-checking the Trump administration’s claims on ‘saving’ coal country

By Nicole Lewis, 1/16/18

“I’m the one that saved coal. I’m the one that created jobs.”

— President Trump, in an interview with the New York Times, Dec. 28, 2017

As a candidate, President Trump vowed to end the “war on coal” and put miners back to work. And over the first year of his presidency, Trump and his administration have moved quickly to overturn several Obama-era regulations on mining and energy production. Most notably, in October, Environmental Protection Agency administrator Scott Pruitt declared the end of the “war on coal” when he signed a rule overturning the Clean Power Plan.

Since the administration's opening salvo to save coal country, Trump has repeatedly claimed that the industry is starting its comeback. Most recently, during a rally in Pensacola, Fla., Trump assured his supporters that there is "1,000 years" worth of coal buried in the ground, insisting that miners are "back to work" tapping into the reserves. But Trump's estimate of the coal supply seemed too good to be true, especially because he paused briefly while searching for the figure. Still, his estimate was met with applause.

The bold claim prompted us to take a closer look at the Trump administration's special interest in the coal industry. Over the months, we have awarded numerous Pinocchios to Trump and others in his administration for misrepresenting the facts about coal.

It seems like every chance he can get, Trump tries to reassure out-of-work miners that their jobs will return, and other members of the administration echo the president's sentiments. But many of their claims are at odds with the market forces that led to coal's decline.

Here's a summary of some of the administration's biggest coal claims.

"We've lifted the restrictions on American energy, including shale, oil, natural gas and clean, beautiful coal, of which we have 1,000 years of supply." (Dec. 8, 2017)

During the rally in Pensacola, Trump assured his supporters that there is enough coal to last 1,000 years. And although the United States has the second-largest recoverable coal reserves in the world, according to the Energy Information Administration, the total amount of coal is hard to measure. That's because coal is buried in the ground.

To address the measuring challenges, coal is broken into several categories: recoverable coal reserves, which refers to coal that can be feasibly mined with today's technology; demonstrated reserve base, which refers to 100 percent of the measured coal that could be mined; and total reserve, which is the best estimate of all the coal in the ground.

The EIA's best estimate of the total reserves is 3.9 trillion short tons, while the reserve base and recoverable reserves are far smaller, at 477 billion and 255 billion short tons, respectively. The Energy Information Administration said in 2015 that the United States had about 283 years of reserves left, based on that year's production figures. Based on the average annual amount of coal produced since 2010, 0.95 billion short tons, the country's estimated recoverable coal reserves would last a little more than 250 years. That's about 750 years less than Trump estimated. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

We award Trump Four Pinocchios.

"If you look at what's happened in West Virginia and so many different places, we're sending clean coal. We're sending it out to different places — China. A lot of coal ordered in China right now. So a lot of things are changing, and they're changing very rapidly." (Dec. 5, 2017)

Trump claims West Virginia is exporting "clean coal" to China. But this is wrong for two reasons. One, in 2015 and 2016, West Virginia exported virtually no coal to China. Two, there is no such thing as "clean coal." Electricity-generating plants can mitigate some of the effects of burning coal by capturing carbon dioxide and burying it, but that doesn't make the coal itself cleaner. And more important, the bulk of the exports of coal to China involve metallurgical coal, which is used to make steel, not generate electricity.

Trump claims "things are changing" in West Virginia thanks to his administration's policies. But again Trump is trying to take credit for things outside his control. Market forces and external factors, such as China imposing regulations on mining its domestic coal supply, coupled with an increased demand for coking coal, have contributed to a price surge, making it cheaper to import coal from the United States.

Trump received Three Pinocchios.

“One thing that I am very proud of: the state of West Virginia. Last month, it was one of the highest percentage increases in GDP, the state of Texas beat it. And people are saying, wait a minute, West Virginia just came in second. Do you know what that is about? That is about cutting regulations and letting the people go and mine.” (Oct. 11, 2017)

Trump takes credit for West Virginia’s economic gains, but it’s undeserved. For one, when the first quarter ended March 31, 2017, Trump was just two months into his presidency. While he was quick to do away with several regulations on energy production, many of the new policies have yet to take effect. The state’s recent growth is due to increased mining production and a rise in prices for coal and natural gas.

According to the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis, mining grew by 26.4 percent in West Virginia in the first quarter of 2017, and “data from EIA shows gains in the extraction of coal, natural gas, and petroleum bolstered mining in the state.” The increase in extraction coincided with an increase in the price of metallurgical coal and natural gas. In the first quarter of 2017, the price of metallurgical coal exports was \$153 per short ton, up from \$76 in the third quarter of 2016. For the first nine months of 2017, the price of natural gas was \$3 per million British thermal units on average, up from a 2016 average of just under \$2.50 per million BTUs.

Trump earned Four Pinocchios.

“The [Paris Climate Agreement] effectively blocks the development of clean coal in America. And the mines are starting to open up, having a big opening in two weeks, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, so many places.” (June 1, 2017)

Trump’s characterization about new mines and “clean carbon” technology, both in the context of the Paris agreement, is misleading.

He referred to new mines opening, but the projects he referred to are for a specific type of coal that is used to produce steel, not electricity. The Paris deal focuses on carbon emissions from electricity-generating coal, not metallurgical coal. Demands in metallurgical coal aren't affected by the Paris agreement or U.S. federal policies; international market prices and fluctuations have led to the recent increase in demand. Moreover, the specific factory he refers to had plans to open since September 2016, two months before the presidential election.

The agreement also does not block the development of "clean coal." In fact, since the United States signed on to the Paris agreement, the first large-scale "clean coal" facility opened in 2017, and plans are underway for a second one.

Trump earned Three Pinocchios.

"Since the fourth quarter of last year until most recently, we've added almost 50,000 jobs in the coal sector. In the month of May alone, almost 7,000 jobs." (June 4, 2017)

During several media appearances, the EPA's Pruitt proudly claimed that 50,000 coal jobs were created since Trump took office. But his numbers were a gross exaggeration.

From January to May, the United States gained 33,000 jobs in "mining and coal," according to preliminary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a few thousand short of Pruitt's claim of 50,000 new jobs. But that's not the biggest problem with his figures. Most of the gain in "mining" jobs had nothing to do with coal. Most of the new jobs were in a subcategory called "support activities for mining," which accounted for more than 30,000 of the jobs since January.

The reality was that at the time, 1,000 coal jobs had been added since Trump became president, though the BLS later adjusted it down to 800 jobs. For the month of May, the gain was 200 jobs, not 7,000.

Administration officials may have been too quick to tout the gains. Preliminary data on coal mining jobs from the BLS show that from October to November the coal industry lost 700 jobs and 400 more from November to December. So, since Trump became president, the gain in coal jobs is 500, or just 1 percent.

Pruitt tried to take advantage of the BLS job labels to suggest that there has been a huge gain in coal/mining jobs, in part by reaching back months before Trump entered the White House. And his claim is even less true today than it was in May.

Pruitt earned Four Pinocchios.

Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/autoshow-detroit-emissions/california-trump-administration-fuel-efficiency-talks-intensify-idUSKBN1F52ML>

California-Trump administration fuel-efficiency talks intensify

By David Shepardson, 1/16/18, 3:56 PM

DETROIT (Reuters) - California and the Trump administration will hold a series of new talks over fuel efficiency rules as the auto industry still hopes for a deal to retain nationwide requirements.

Officials from the California Air Resources Board are set to meet in Washington this month for another round of discussions on the 2022-2025 fuel-efficiency rules, automakers and government officials said on Tuesday. Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt told Reuters last week that more talks are also planned in California in the coming weeks.

California, which touts its environmental agenda and efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, has been increasingly at odds with the Trump administration's efforts to roll back environmental

regulations.

Automakers want the White House and California to reach agreement on revisions because a legal battle over the rules could result in lengthy uncertainty for the industry. They also want changes to address lower gasoline prices and a shift in U.S. consumer preferences to larger, less fuel-efficient vehicles.

A group representing General Motors Co, Volkswagen AG (VOWG_p.DE), Toyota Motor Corp and other automakers has encouraged more talks between California and federal regulators in hopes an agreement is reached.

In 2011, California's air emissions regulator and the Obama administration reached an agreement with major automakers to nearly double average fleetwide fuel efficiency to more than 50 miles per gallon by 2025, but included a "midterm review" to determine by April 2018 whether the final requirements were feasible.

California, joined by nearly a dozen other states, could seek to enforce existing emissions rules, even if the Trump administration softens the federal 2022-2025 requirements.

Pruitt told Reuters last week that no decisions on the requirements have been made but he hoped national rules would remain. "California doesn't have the authority to set the standards for the rest of the country," Pruitt said.

Asked if EPA would consider withdrawing California's waiver under the Clean Air Act to set its own emission rules, Pruitt said: "There's no reason to speculate on that right now. I think that what's important is that we continue to reach out to work with California."

Reuters first reported earlier this month that the Trump administration met with California officials on Dec. 15 to discuss the programme.

The meeting included EPA air office chief Bill Wehrum, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) deputy chief Heidi King, and White House aide Mike Catanzaro.

NHTSA plans to issue its proposed changes, if any, for the 2022-25 model years by March 30. The agency is “on track” to meet that deadline, King told Reuters on the sidelines of the Detroit auto show on Tuesday. She expects it to propose “a broad range of options.”

In a move widely seen as a preamble to loosening fuel standards, U.S. President Donald Trump announced in March he was revisiting the 2025 requirements.

In June, New York state’s attorney general and 12 other top state law officials said they would mount a court challenge to any effort to roll back vehicle fuel rules.

Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrats-probe-for-weak-spots-among-trump-administration-contractors/article/2646111>

Democrats probe for weak spots among Trump administration contractors

By John Siciliano, 1/16/18, 5:55 PM

Democrats are targeting a new perceived soft spot in the Trump administration's armor by going after "sweetheart" deals with companies contracted by federal agencies.

Democratic Reps. Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Alan Lowenthal of California sent a letter Tuesday to the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management asking for responses to financial and legal questions about a contract with EnergyNet, which was contracted to manage the agency’s online oil and natural gas leasing program.

"It is notable that EnergyNet charges bidders a 1.5 percent 'buyer premium' on top of each bonus bid. In addition to being a windfall for EnergyNet, the premium potentially drives down the amount that companies are willing to bid, which effectively takes money that should be going to the American taxpayer and directs it to EnergyNet," the lawmakers wrote.

Grijalva, the top Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, and Lowenthal, the top Democrat on a minerals subcommittee, want the agency to give them copies of the EnergyNet contract and other documents so they can verify the terms of the deal detailed recently by the liberal think tank Center for American Progress and Outside Magazine.

"In the context of the hydraulic fracturing rule, which is intended to improve protections for the environment and public health, BLM found that an increase of 0.2 percent to the cost of a well was unjustly burdensome, but BLM has not expressed any similar concerns about this 1.5 percent buyer premium that potentially lowers taxpayer revenue," reads the letter.

The letter follows a successful push by Democratic lawmakers to get the EPA to rescind a contract with Virginia media consulting firm Definers Corp.

Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island and Kamala Harris of California challenged EPA's use of a no-bid basis in selecting the company to track stories written about the agency in the media.

Definers is a Republican opposition firm that has links to campaigns targeting such prominent Democrats as Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

"EPA's contract with Definers risks further politicizing the agency and is another instance of EPA under your tenure becoming captured by the industry it regulates," the senators wrote in a Dec. 19 letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "At a minimum, it presents an appearance of impropriety to which you as administrator should never be a party. For the reasons that follow, you should terminate this contract immediately."

The Democratic lawmakers cited that a \$120,000 no-bid contract was awarded to the PR firm, as reported by Mother Jones and the New York Times. Pressure mounted on the agency by consumer protection advocates and environmental firms that pressed for an investigation into the contract.

Soon after the senators sent the letter, the PR company decided to end its relationship with the EPA, stating that it has become too much of a "distraction" to continue.

On the oil and gas leasing contract, Grijalva's office said it was too early in the information collection process to consider any specific outcomes to the Democrat's probe into EnergyNet.

Democratic aides point out that they aren't specifically targeting one company, but the federal process that allows contractors to take advantage of the bidding process.

BN

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=127000544&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Fuel Economy Target Set for March Release, NHTSA Head Says

By Ryan Beene and John Lippert, 1/17/18

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will propose new fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks by the end of March, signaling how the Trump administration plans to alter ambitious automobile efficiency rules created under former President Barack Obama.

President Donald Trump in March reinstated a review of coordinated NHTSA and Environmental Protection Agency rules governing fuel economy, part of his drive to eliminate regulations.

NHTSA Deputy Administrator Heidi King said in a Jan. 16 interview at the Detroit auto show that the proposed rule would be released on March 30, but declined to discuss its contents. Under a process set during the Obama administration, the proposal was slated to cover model years 2022 through 2025.

NHTSA has said current CAFE standards for model year 2021 may also change.

“It will be a proposal that will stimulate dialogue, robust listening to the data and the stakeholders that should inform a decision before we go to a final rule stage,” King said.

Automakers lobbied Trump and other administration officials to take a second look at the standards, which carmakers say need adjustments in light of surging light-truck sales, low gasoline prices, and tepid demand for plug-in vehicles.

The so-called national program of vehicle efficiency regulations was enacted to slash fuel consumption and cut greenhouse gas emissions as part of Obama's climate-change policy agenda. The regulation included a mid-term review to evaluate if the rules were appropriate. That review was to coincide with the NHTSA rulemaking, which King said would be coordinated with the EPA.

Automakers in 2011 agreed to a trio of coordinated rules overseen by the EPA, NHTSA, and the California Air Resources Board that get more stringent each year, ending at a fleet average of more than 50 miles per gallon by 2025. That's equivalent to about 36 miles per gallon in real-world driving.

E&E Greenwire

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060071065/search?keyword=EPA>

Marine base had problems years before EPA deal — documents

1/16/18

Contractors at Camp Pendleton in Southern California had been grappling with drinking water contamination long before U.S. EPA inspectors discovered dead animal carcasses floating in the base reservoirs last June.

Contractors brought in to clean up and inspect the 34 reservoirs on the base between 2014 and 2017 found dirt and rodents in the system and corrosion problems that had been allowed to continue for years, according to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

What's more, contractors inspected only 27 of the reservoirs over the four-year period, the documents show, even though the Marine Corps required visits to all 34.

When problems were uncovered, they appear to have been ignored. For instance, one contractor wrote in 2014 that a steel storage tank needed to be discharged and recoated to prevent corrosion as soon as possible, but two years later, nothing has been done.

Then in June 2017, EPA arrived on the scene and found decaying animals in the reservoirs and "significant deficiencies" in the camp's water treatment program. The agency later entered into a consent decree with the Marine Corps to get it into compliance with federal law (Greenwire, Sept. 29, 2017).

The Marines maintain the water is and always has been safe to drink, though they acknowledge deficiencies in the treatment system. EPA, meanwhile, said the consent decree should provide enough incentive to get the base into compliance.

"EPA is currently engaged with top military officials for Camp Pendleton, providing a higher level of scrutiny for all work completed for the drinking water systems. In addition, detailed inspection reports with photographs are sent to EPA for review," said EPA spokesman Dean Higuchi (Carl Prine, San Diego Union-Tribune, Jan. 16). — NS

Daily Chronicle

<http://www.daily-chronicle.com/2018/01/16/d-428-replacing-drinking-fountains-sinks-testing-positive-for-lead/adv4toz/>

D-428 replacing drinking fountains, sinks testing positive for lead

By Drew Zimmerman, 1/17/18, 7:07 AM

DeKALB – After a drinking fountain at Huntley Middle School was found to have a lead content higher than DeKalb School District 428's recommended action level for remediation or replacement, the district is looking to replace that fountain and recommending the replacement of five others with positive test results.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recommended action level for lead at schools is 20 parts per billion, but the district made the decision to set a 15 parts per billion action level as a more conservative approach during its testing last year. The full results of state-mandated lead testing for district water sources were released last week and discussed during Tuesday's board meeting.

Although there were some faucets that tested four or five times the recommended action level, Tammy Carson, director of facility operations, said the overall results were very manageable and easy to handle.

The fountain at Huntley was a side-by-side unit, but the other faucet did not test above the action level. Because of the varied test results, Carson said it's more likely a problem with the fountain itself than a problem with the piping. The fountain has been shut off and a replacement was

ordered.

Carson said a replacement sink for one that tested at more than 15 ppb at Clinton Rosette Middle School is also being ordered because it had been used for washing vegetables. A replacement sink for the health office of Brooks Elementary School also has been ordered after testing at more than 15 ppb since it could be used to fill up a cup for water to help a child swallow medication.

The five other drinking fountains being recommended for replacement tested between 5 ppb and 15 ppb and are also being recommended for replacement, which would be a fairly inexpensive investment, Carson said.

Some parents were still concerned over the high results in other faucets. One DeKalb parent with a child at Jefferson Elementary School, which had a faucet that tested at 1,480 ppb, said during public comment that she felt disheartened by the results.

On any classroom sink testing at more than 15 ppb, a sign will be placed stating “not for drinking.” Any kitchen or food service sink over 15 ppb will be retested and options for remediation will be considered, according to district documents. The district will also review preventive maintenance and inspection procedures to possibly include additional inspections and flushing of all drinking sources.

Bryan Faivre, superintendent of DeKalb’s utilities division, was present during the board meeting and said the city of DeKalb has always been in compliance for lead since testing first started in 1990.

The city’s action level is also 15 ppb, which Faivre said is not necessarily a health risk, but is a level where municipalities would have to treat the water.

This usually means adding phosphate, which provides a coating to water pipes to prevent the metal from leeching into water.

Faivre said that lead is usually a localized issue to each residence or to each faucet within the residence.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 1/8/2018 10:44:08 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Crucial day for water fights at Supreme Court — Grid withstands frigid winter blast — Steyer to announce political plans today

By Anthony Adragna and Kelsey Tamborrino | 01/08/2018 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Annie Snider, Darius Dixon and Alex Guillén

HIGH NOON FOR WATER WARS: The Supreme Court hears arguments this morning in a pair of long-running water disputes between states that will test what role the federal government should play in such conflicts. First up is *Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado*, a case where the federal government intervened on the side of Texas, which argues that New Mexico is allowing its residents to take water that belongs to the Lone Star state under a 1939 compact. A court-appointed special master faulted the federal government's move, writing in an interim report last year that the U.S. overstepped its bounds since it has no claim itself to the water, and should only be allowed to bring claims under reclamation law. The high court today will consider only what the federal government's role should be, not the merits of the water fight itself.

The second case in the double-header is *Florida v. Georgia*, where the federal government took the opposite tack. Even though the Army Corps of Engineers operates a series of dams and reservoirs along the contested Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River river system, it did not join the litigation when Florida sued Georgia in 2014 to cap its offtake after Florida's prized Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery collapsed. The court-appointed special master in this case ruled last February that Florida showed "real harm" and at least "likely misuse of resources by Georgia," but said that without the federal government's involvement, there was no way to guarantee that a cap on the Peach State's consumption would result in more water for Florida. Justices today decide whether to accept the special master's ruling for Georgia.

More than parochial: It won't just be the parties tangled in these particular water fights who will be watching closely. Water rights have traditionally been the purview of the states, and they have fought hard to keep it that way. As growing populations and fluctuations in supplies stress water basins across the country, states will be watching the justices closely to see how much power the federal government should have in settling these type of fights in the future.

WELCOME TO MONDAY! We're your co-hosts Anthony Adragna and Kelsey Tamborrino, and EPA's Aaron Ringel was first to identify Robert Todd Lincoln as being in the area for three presidential assassinations. For today: Which current congressman served almost ten years on their state's public service commission? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com and ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@KelseyTam](https://twitter.com/KelseyTam), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: EPA staffers offered up suggestions to improve the agency in an internal anonymous survey last year ranging from increasing agency budgets to making it easier for staffers to work from home. The survey obtained by POLITICO showed the majority of the more than 1,400 responses stayed true to traditional bureaucratic grievances, Pro's Alex

Guillén reports, but dozens of employees also used the survey to vent frustrations about Administrator Scott Pruitt and the Trump administration. "The only way to increase efficiency at EPA is to increase the budget and allow room for innovative ideas. There is no time or money to focus on innovation because staff are spread too thin," wrote one employee. Others offered some positive comments, but some employees argued that budget cuts would undermine Pruitt's goal of establishing better coordination with the states. And almost 100 workers pressed for greater telework opportunities.

Behind the cloak of anonymity others used the survey as an opportunity to bash the administration's political leadership — two called for Trump to be impeached — with multiple comments expressing dismay at watching Pruitt or Trump bash EPA and praise coal miners. "It would be nice if the administration showed some empathy for us," one employee wrote. The survey, conducted in May 2017, comes as part of EPA's effort to be "more efficient, effective and accountable," according to an all-staff email from Pruitt's chief of staff. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency was taking the survey responses seriously.

PASSED THE TEST: The frigid blast that sent temperatures plunging across the East will start to ease today, but the past few days may have sapped the urgency to act on Energy Secretary Rick Perry's controversial grid resiliency pricing proposal, which argued that the electric system was threatened by extreme cold periods. Still, the cold snap brought a bit of good news for several fuels: coal got to shine in PJM (as natural gas prices soared enough to make it competitive); oil helped save the day as New England showed its wintertime dependence on the niche power fuel; nuclear reactors provided large chunks of power across the Northeast even though a power line outage shut the Pilgrim plant in Massachusetts; and, in PJM, wind power routinely contributed 4,000 megawatts or more.

Perry's plan calls for giving financial support to power plants that keep 90 days' worth of fuel on-site, effectively limiting it to coal and nuclear generation - and to PJM in particular. To press his point, Perry's rule specifically urged FERC to "take action before the winter heating season begins so as to prevent the potential failure of the grid from the loss of fuel-secure generation — as almost happened during the 2014 Polar Vortex." Yet, our recent cold snap, which shot demand in PJM up to around 136,400 MW over the weekend (just 4,100 MW short of the 2014 event) showed that for most of the East, the issue is more about high prices rather than low fuel stocks.

And then there's New England. The region continues to struggle with the impacts of its longstanding infrastructure limits in the winter: power prices are high, natural gas demand for heating required generators to turn to oil-fired electricity production, and last week's storm hindered some resupply of oil. There are four nuclear reactors in New England, and having an onsite fuel requirement wouldn't have kept Pilgrim from tripping offline Thursday.

ISO-New England spokesperson Marcia Blomberg said the region's power system continued "to operate reliably" throughout the weekend but aired a considerable amount of caution. "While the ISO is continually assessing the reliability of the system, other conditions continue to make grid operations difficult," she wrote in an email to reporters Sunday. "Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station remains out of service, some oil-fired generation is nearing emissions limitations, and other

power plants are awaiting fuel deliveries that were postponed because of Thursday's storm. But these deliveries will not begin before [today] at the earliest."

HEADS UP! FERC has until Wednesday to take some sort of action on Perry proposed rule to support coal-fired and nuclear power plants. His "grid resiliency proposal" calls for guaranteeing payments to power plants that maintain 90 days of fuel on site. Few observers expect FERC to fully embrace the former Texas governor's proposal, and it's got a wide range of options to consider, from issuing an interim rule to holding a technical conferences or issuing a request for information.

FOR YOUR RADAR: President Donald Trump is due to deliver remarks today at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Nashville, and officials expect the administration's effort to eliminate Obama-era regulations, including its intended rewrite of the Obama-era waters of the U.S. rule, to pop up during the speech. "This is an audience that has warmly welcomed the deregulatory agenda pushed by the President, and I would expect acknowledgment of that on both sides," the National Economic Council's Ray Starling said.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE HOLD? Billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer makes a big announcement about "his political future and plans for 2018" today at 10:45 a.m. today in Washington (which seems to make a California gubernatorial or Senate bid seem a lot less likely). That comes as he unveiled a number of senior hires at his NextGen America: Heather Hargreaves as executive director and Aleigha Cavalier as communications director, among others.

IZEMBEK ON DECK: The Interior Department has approved a land swap deal that Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) has [been pushing](#) for years, both [The Washington Post](#) and [New York Times](#) reported this weekend. Interior will allow a remote Alaskan village to construct a 12-mile road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, overruling decades-old wilderness protections, and linking King Cove to an isolated all-weather airport.

In response, the Sierra Club slammed the plan as "disastrous" and urged the administration to reconsider. "Trump and Zinke should instead review the options previously proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, and develop a solution that meets the needs of local residents while protecting Izembek National Wildlife Refuge," Athan Manuel, the group's land protection program director, said in a statement.

WHITE HOUSE PREPARING SOLAR TRADE DECISION: The White House is readying to unveil an aggressive trade crackdown targeting China and other competitors' alleged unfair practices, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia and Doug Palmer report, including a decision on whether or not to put a tariff on solar imports. Trump is scheduled to meet with Cabinet secretaries and senior advisers as soon as this week, an administration source said, to begin finalizing trade decisions like the one on solar imports. "Senior aides are also laying plans to use Trump's State of the Union address at the end of the month to flesh out the president's trade vision and potentially preview a more aggressive posture toward China," Andrew and Doug write. Upcoming meetings will shed light on just how aggressive the president plans to be, with aides saying the solar decision isn't expected this week but could come the week after. Read

more.

PANEL: OROVILLE DAM DISASTER 'A WAKEUP CALL' FOR DAM SAFETY:

Independent investigators probing the cause of last year's dangerous spillway failure at the highest dam in the country that forced the evacuation of nearly 200,000 residents downstream have cited a "long-term systemic failure" by both the state of California and federal regulators. In a 584 page report released Friday, the forensic team pointed to errors dating back to the 1960s when an inexperienced engineer was put in charge of designing the dam's two spillways. The panel said the state put "insufficient priority" on dam safety and too much emphasis on delivering water to the State Water Project, which feeds major agricultural users and big southern California metropolitan areas.

"The fact that this incident happened to the owner of the tallest dam in the United States, under regulation of a federal agency, with repeated evaluation by reputable outside consultants, in a state with a leading dam safety regulatory program, is a wake-up call for everyone involved in dam safety," the panel wrote.

DON'T YOU KNOW EACH CLOUD CONTAINS PEBBLES FROM HEAVEN: The Army Corps of Engineers says it has received a complete application from the developers of the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska, triggering what will be a years-long process to produce an environmental impact study for the controversial project. Aside from the open-pit mine, the company seeks to build a 230-megawatt natural gas power plant on site, a 188-mile gas pipeline to feed it, an 83-mile transportation corridor to move metal to Cook Inlet, and a permanent export facility. "We believe that as people become more familiar with our proposed project design and the environmental safeguards it incorporates, there will be an increasing degree of support for the project," said Pebble Partnership CEO Tom Collier.

Opponents of the rule will point to EPA's previous work under the Obama administration that concluded mining of any scale was too risky for the world's biggest wild salmon fishery. A court deal between the developers and EPA last year allowed the application with the Army Corps to move forward, but Alaska's governor, independent Bill Walker, has long opposed the mine, saying last October that developers had not proven the project would not risk the fish.

WISCONSIN VIP PLANT CLEARS KEY HURDLE: Foxconn's much-anticipated Wisconsin liquid-crystal display screens plant won a major victory after a pond and roughly 26 acres of wetlands just miles from Lake Michigan were too isolated from larger downstream waters to merit federal Clean Water Act protections, Pro's Annie Snider reports. The project has been touted by Trump, who took credit for the company's investment at a July White House event with the company's chairman. And it's been a major priority for Gov. Scott Walker and House Speaker Paul Ryan, in whose district the facility would be built.

MAIL CALL — JERSEY NO FAN OF DRILLING: Three Democratic New Jersey lawmakers told Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke the draft offshore drilling plan should be "immediately rejected" in a Friday letter. The proposal "shows a complete disregard for New Jersey's economy, environment, and quality of life, and should be immediately rejected," Sens. Bob Menendez and Cory Booker and House Energy and Commerce ranking member Frank

Pallone, write, citing the need for an "unspoiled coastline" as the state continues to rebuild post-Hurricane Sandy. Read it [here](#).

PALLONE-LED LETTER PUTS FOCUS ON AXED CONTRACT: A group of Democratic lawmakers aired their "outstanding questions" on EPA's now-canceled contract with the Republican-affiliated Definers Public Affairs on Friday. "Hiring a firm that offers services attacking the press and surveilling your employees threatens the functioning of your agency and potentially the freedom of the press guaranteed by our Constitution," the lawmakers, led by Pallone, wrote to Pruitt. The letter gives Pruitt until Jan. 19 to respond to a series of questions related to Definers role at the agency. Read it [here](#).

BISHOP'S STANDING INVITE: House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop offered up a standing invitation to Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard, after he declined an invitation to testify. "Despite your apparent refusal to engage with those who see the world differently than you, I remain committed to hearing all voices and perspectives," Bishop wrote in a Friday [letter](#).

THE SAUDI ARABIA OF SOLAR: A new report from the Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis zeros in on the Southwest's potential for solar development, particularly in northeast Arizona. The Navajo Nation, the report finds, "is at the center of a region that stands to become a major source of solar-powered generation as part of a trend in which solar is capturing a growing piece of U.S. power-generation markets."

MOVER, SHAKER: Zachary Kahan is joining the House Energy & Commerce Committee staff as the Democratic outreach and member services coordinator. He was previously the advocacy and PAC manager for the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (h/t POLITICO Influence).

— **Kateri Callahan is leaving the** Alliance to Save Energy after 14 years as its president for a yet-to-be-announced efficiency job in the private sector. ASE announced Friday it begins a national search for her replacement.

QUICK HITS

— Iranian oil tanker collides with freighter off China; 32 crew members missing. [Globe and Mail](#).

— Nearly 200 nations promise to stop ocean plastic waste, [Reuters](#).

— Pennsylvania Coal Mine To Close. [NPR](#).

— Sununu opposes Trump administration's offshore drilling plan. [AP](#).

— Trump plan to expand oil and gas leasing in West draws, for the most part, a big yawn from industry. [Los Angeles Times](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

10:45 a.m. — Tom Steyer makes major announcement in Washington regarding 2018 plans, 101 Constitution Ave NW

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — "DOE Modernization: Advancing DOE's Mission for National, Economic, and Energy Security of the United States," House Energy and Commerce Committee, RHOB 2123

10:00 a.m. — The House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee holds a hearing on H.R.4532, the "Shash Jaa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument Act," 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "Taiwan's Energy Challenge: Meeting the Needs to Power Growth," Wilson Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

12:30 p.m. — The American Petroleum Institute holds its annual State of Energy address, Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Atrium Ballroom, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

6:00 p.m. — "Lessons Learned from Political Appointees," Women's Council on Energy and the Environment, Dentons, 1900 K Street NW

WEDNESDAY

9:00 a.m. — "Stories to Watch 2018," World Resources Institute, 10 G Street NE Suite 800

10:00 a.m. — "America's Water Infrastructure Needs and Challenges," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

THURSDAY

1:30 p.m. — The Source Water Collaborative hosts a webinar on source water protection efforts using USDA resources and funding.

4:00 p.m. — "A Discussion with Dr. Ernest J. Moniz," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

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<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/01/crucial-day-for-water-fights-at-supreme-court-067184>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

EPA staffers suggest room for improvement in anonymous internal survey [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 01/08/2018 05:02 AM EDT

EPA employees offered hundreds of suggestions to improve the agency, ranging from increasing budgets to making it easier for staff to work from home, which proponents argued would save both money and the environment, according to the results of an internal EPA survey last year obtained by POLITICO.

The vast majority of [more than 1,400 anonymous responses](#) hewed to traditional bureaucratic complaints or suggestions to improve EPA's programs, but dozens of employees also took the opportunity to vent their frustrations about Administrator Scott Pruitt and the Trump administration's plans to shift EPA's priorities and cut its budget, which many career staffers felt was already too low.

"The only way to increase efficiency at EPA is to increase the budget and allow room for innovative ideas. There is no time or money to focus on innovation because staff are spread too thin," one employee wrote.

The survey was conducted anonymously in May 2017, about three months after Pruitt arrived, as part of the Trump administration's effort to make EPA "more efficient, effective and accountable," according to an all-staff email from Pruitt's chief of staff. It predates the departure of more than 700 EPA employees, many of whom left following an early buyout and retirement push last year.

A few employees even responded with nothing but positive comments.

"I have no complaints," one staffer wrote. "I think the EPA is doing fantastic work as is."

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency took the survey responses "seriously."

"For example, we are using employee feedback to develop a more productive relationship with the states and improve our procurement procedures so they are more fair and equitable," she said in an email.

Hundreds of workers raised issues with the agency's budget, ranging from how much money EPA gets from Congress to how that money is allocated, according to a POLITICO analysis of the survey results, which were released in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

Some employees argued that budget cuts would undermine one of Pruitt's top goals: better coordination with the states.

"Dramatically decreasing the budget will only hurt our ability to achieve better environmental results by hampering our ability to travel out into the community or visit the state to foster that

relationship and build trust," one wrote. "Phone calls and emails are not a good substitutes [sic] for face-to-face interaction, and a skeleton budget will make travel and that crucial interaction impossible."

More than 100 EPA workers weighed in on the Superfund program, which Pruitt has also identified as a key priority.

One person suggested making the recommendations of two key Superfund advisory groups mandatory, saying it would save time and resources. Other suggestions focused on consolidation, reorganization or delegation to the states to handle most Superfund work.

And almost 100 workers pressed for greater telework opportunities, which they said would save time, money and the environment by cutting down on commuting and would allow the agency to lease less office space.

Some employees took advantage of the survey's anonymity to bash the administration's political leadership — two even called for President Donald Trump to be impeached — with multiple comments expressing dismay at watching Pruitt or Trump bash the agency and praise coal miners.

"It would be nice if the administration showed some empathy for us," one employee wrote.

Another worker called for an end to "this rhetoric of Pruitt coming in and rescuing the states from EPA's grasps. EPA has been partnering with states for decades; maybe the Administration could learn about those partnerships by actually talking to EPA employees." Someone else questioned what respecting states' rights really means. "Does giving more power to states mean agreeing with them on everything[?] Does it mean agreeing with California or New York governors on all positions, or some?"

Not all EPA employees agreed with that point; one wrote that "states view us as their enemies instead of their partners."

Meanwhile, some employees used the opportunity to raise pet peeves.

One person complained that their agency-issued cellphone is a flip phone that has not been upgraded in six years. Smartphones equipped with cameras and other tools would make certain work much more efficient, they said.

Another said that EPA needs to better prioritize its workflow so that employees don't have to put aside "important work" in order to write a response "to a second grade class that wrote a letter to the administrator."

One worker in their 50s complained that too many EPA employees in their 70s are staying at the agency too long. "They have friends, coffee pots, and muddle through their day," the worker wrote. "A healthy person should plan for retirement and move into the next place in their life, not plan to die at the office."

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Alaska's long road war [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 04/04/2014 05:00 PM EDT

In the fall of 1998, Frank Murkowski took to the Senate floor to make an impassioned plea for the authority to build a one-lane gravel road from the isolated southwestern Alaska village of King Cove to a neighboring community with an all-weather airport.

"This is a road to life for the residents of King Cove," he said.

More than 15 years later, his daughter, Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski — along with the rest of the Alaska congressional delegation — is still fighting for the road, insisting it's the only viable way to ensure that King Cove's 965 largely native Alaskan residents have access to emergency medical care.

([Also on POLITICO: Full transportation and infrastructure policy coverage](#))

What seems like a simple request is anything but. The proposed road would cut through federally protected wilderness land in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, a 315,000-acre sanctuary near the tip of the Alaska Peninsula. And the Interior Department says the road would threaten vulnerable plants and animals that rely on the area's unique ecology.

The oftentimes ugly fight has pitted Alaska politicians against the federal government for decades, sowing mistrust and frustration. It has also reinforced the view of many in Alaska that policymakers in the Lower 48 are out of touch with their needs.

At the same time, the battle has laid bare tensions between Alaskan leaders and conservation groups, which argue that approving the road could set a dangerous national precedent in other protected wilderness areas.

Lisa Murkowski and Alaska Democratic Sen. Mark Begich, who faces a tight reelection fight, are vowing to do everything in their power to win approval for the road, even though the Interior Department rejected the proposal late last year after a four-year analysis.

([PHOTOS: 10 tough Senate races for Democrats](#))

Murkowski is using her position as the top Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to elevate the issue, expressing her outrage at hearings and in floor speeches and holding a series of news conferences with King Cove residents. She has also [lambasted](#) Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, who [announced](#) the most recent rejection of the road

just two days before Christmas.

"I am not willing to let a day go by without raising this as an issue," Murkowski said in an interview.

The road would give King Cove residents access to the larger airport in the nearby community of Cold Bay when extreme weather grounds flights at the smaller King Cove airport. King Cove has a medical clinic, but residents often have to travel to Anchorage for major procedures and emergencies.

The road, proponents argue, is the best solution to the transportation problems that have long plagued isolated King Cove.

Besides its small airport, the town has access by boat across the Izembek Lagoon, but foul weather can make air and boat travel difficult, residents say. Supporters of the road say at least 19 deaths over the years have resulted from plane crashes or an inability to obtain adequate medical care.

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Della Trumble, a King Cove resident and longtime advocate for the road, said its approval is a matter of life and death.

"I just feel strongly that the human factor far outweighs the wildlife," she said. "We will protect the wildlife. It's who we are."

Trumble and other residents have made dozens of trips to Washington to make their case, telling stories of family and friends who have been hurt or killed trying to get out of the community during storms. Trumble said she watched as her niece was flown out for a medical emergency amid winds of 70 to 80 mph. She said another niece was born on the galley table of a crab boat during an evacuation attempt.

Just this week, an injured fisherman was flown out of King Cove by the Coast Guard, marking the fifth medical evacuation of the year, according to [King Cove officials](#).

But opponents say the road would wreak havoc on the refuge and its wildlife. The refuge hosts more than 200 species, including caribou, grizzly bear and, in the fall, about 98 percent of the world's Pacific black brant. It also has one of the largest eelgrass beds on the planet and was one of the first areas in the U.S. to be designated as a [wetland of international importance](#).

"You can't punch a road through there without doing serious damage," said Don Barry, who served as Interior's assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks during the Clinton administration.

In addition, the proposed road faces major legal hurdles. In 1980, Congress designated most of the refuge as wilderness, the highest level of public land protection.

Barry, now a senior official at the conservation group Defenders of Wildlife, said it would be unprecedented to allow a road through a wilderness area. Though the refuge has some old military roads, they were built before the conservation laws were enacted.

Several opponents raised concerns that approving the road would lead to a push for development in other protected areas.

"Once you carve a road of this kind right through the middle of a national wildlife refuge, where does it stop?" former Clinton administration Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt asked.

Babbitt and other opponents have also suggested that the road could be used for commercial purposes, noting that Peter Pan Seafoods has a cannery in King Cove. "But despite pledges and promises to the contrary, the real purpose for building the road is the same as it ever was: moving fish and workers to and from King Cove's canneries," Babbitt wrote in the Los Angeles Times last month.

Peter Pan has rejected those accusations, and Murkowski notes that her legislation calling for approval of the road specifically bars using it for commercial purposes.

The fight over the road burst into public view in the late 1990s, when then-Sen. Frank Murkowski pushed legislation that would allow for approval of the road as part of a land exchange. The bill passed the Senate in 1998 but never passed the House. President Bill Clinton threatened a veto amid concerns about the road's effect on wildlife.

Soon after, then-Sen. Ted Stevens launched into a tense series of negotiations with the Interior Department. The resulting compromise was a \$37.5 million appropriation approved by Congress to improve the King Cove medical clinic and airport and make accommodations for a hovercraft to transport residents to Cold Bay. The hovercraft was used until 2011, but it is being sold because, operators said, it was too expensive to operate.

"Finally it was settled — and now it turns out it isn't," said Babbitt, who worked with Stevens to negotiate the deal and strongly opposed the road.

Within several years, the issue was back on the table. Lisa Murkowski included a provision in a 2009 bill calling on the Interior Department to analyze the road and proposing another land exchange. In exchange for setting aside land in the refuge for the road, the federal government would receive more than 43,000 acres of Alaska state land and more than 13,000 acres of land owned by the King Cove Native Corp.

The provision set off a four-year analysis by Interior that culminated in December with the department's rejection of the road.

"While the proposed land exchange would bring many more acres of land into the Refuge System, the analysis indicates that the increased acreage could not compensate for the unique values of existing refuge lands, nor the anticipated effects that the proposed road would have on

wildlife, habitat, subsistence resources and wilderness values of the Refuge," the department said in a statement at the time.

The decision infuriated the Alaska delegation and has strained Murkowski's relationship with Jewell.

After hearing about the decision, Murkowski said she told Jewell, "I cannot forgive the fact that you have delivered this, that you have dashed all hope for the people of King Cove, and the fact that you did this the week of Christmas is absolutely callous and cold-hearted."

Other Alaska lawmakers have similarly taken Jewell to task. "If someone dies out of King Cove, I want you to really think about it and be ashamed of yourself," Rep. Don Young told Jewell at a hearing Thursday.

The road's opponents say viable alternatives exist — a notion that Murkowski and others reject. Opponents also argue that the road, which would snake through isolated land often battered by extreme weather, would pose its own dangers.

At a recent Senate hearing, Jewell said she is committed to working with King Cove residents to find alternatives. During a recent meeting with Begich, she said she will again listen to the community's concerns.

"Jewell committed to reviewing the information that the community plans to provide on the issue and to provide a response to the senators, State of Alaska and the community on their request to reconsider the final decision," Interior spokeswoman Jessica Kershaw said in an email.

Alaska lawmakers face major hurdles toward changing Interior's mind but say they're not giving up.

Begich said in a recent interview that he hopes to attach his bill approving the road to upcoming Interior appropriations legislation. Murkowski vowed to continue hammering away as well.

"This secretary has made a decision, and I think she thought the people of King Cove were tucked far enough away that nobody would be making a big deal about this," Murkowski said. "But I'm not forgetting them, and it's not just an idle threat."

CORRECTION: A previous version of this story offered an incorrect name for the city where King Cove residents sometimes have to travel for major medical procedures.

To view online [click here](#).

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White House preparing for trade crackdown [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia and Doug Palmer | 01/07/2018 04:02 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's administration is preparing to unveil an aggressive trade crackdown in the coming weeks that is likely to include new tariffs aimed at countering China's and other economic competitors' alleged unfair trade practices, according to three administration officials.

Trump is tentatively scheduled to meet with Cabinet secretaries and senior advisers as soon as this week to begin finalizing decisions on a slew of pending trade fights involving everything from imports of steel and solar panels to Chinese policies regarding intellectual property, according to one of the administration officials.

Senior aides are also laying plans to use Trump's State of the Union address at the end of the month to flesh out the president's trade vision and potentially preview a more aggressive posture toward China, according to the official.

Aides stressed that the specifics are still in flux, but multiple officials told POLITICO that internal conversations have moved beyond the basic question of whether Trump should take tough trade steps and are now focused on what precise measures the president should impose.

By turning to trade, Trump is returning to a key campaign pledge that many advisers worry he did not deliver on in his first year in office. And with limited prospects for passing legislation, trade is one of a handful of major policy areas on which the president can act without having to rely on Congress.

Aides said the upcoming closed-door trade meetings with the president will help shed more light on his thinking. Trump's senior advisers have been fighting behind the scenes for months over the direction of his trade agenda, but officials on both sides of the debate said it remained unclear exactly how aggressive the president was prepared to be.

One official said the president is "undecided and could come out any number of ways." Still, it is "very likely" that the president will greenlight tariffs of some kind in the coming weeks, the official added, a move that could prompt severe blowback from targeted countries.

Trump has repeatedly expressed frustration to his aides that his administration hasn't taken more aggressive trade steps, and he has encouraged his advisers to present him with options that include harsh tariffs on Chinese imports, according to officials.

The president outlined his thinking on trade during meetings with Republican congressional leaders at Camp David this weekend. Some Republican lawmakers cautioned against going too far on trade, raising concerns about pulling out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, according to people familiar with the Camp David meetings. GOP senators have made similar arguments during recent meetings with the president at the White House.

A White House spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment.

Amid widespread concern that the president's impulsive decision-making could spark a trade

war, Trump's advisers have been organizing weekly meetings since last spring to weigh their options — including where to set any tariffs and import quotas and how much to single out China — in the various outstanding trade cases in the hopes of presenting the president with well-researched policy proposals.

With an overhaul of the tax code complete, the Tuesday meetings, led by White House staff secretary Rob Porter, have been heating up in recent weeks, with key staffers being tasked with drafting memos and conducting economic analyses of key policy options, according to people who participate in the huddles.

The meetings regularly include key Cabinet secretaries and senior administration officials, including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, trade adviser Peter Navarro, Council of Economic Advisers chairman Kevin Hassett and National Economic Council director Gary Cohn.

Cohn, according to two administration officials, wants to stay in the White House at least long enough to help shepherd the trade decisions to the finish line.

Trump's advisers are deeply divided on trade, with Cohn and others calling for a more moderate, targeted approach, and others, like Navarro, advocating for sweeping actions. In the past, the meetings have sometimes turned into shouting matches, but aides said they have been less tense over the past couple of months.

Trump spent much of the presidential campaign promising to take a tough stance on trade, but some of the president's hard-line allies have privately worried that he hasn't done enough, even though he pulled the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and is renegotiating both the North American Free Trade Agreement and a free trade agreement with South Korea. The president's former chief strategist and now nemesis Steve Bannon and other China hawks have called on him to impose stiff tariffs on the Asian superpower.

After a year of bluster on trade, a series of deadlines will force Trump to decide just how aggressively he is willing to use U.S. trade remedy laws, given the likelihood of retaliation from China, the European Union and other trade partners.

The pending trade actions are controversial, with the potential to cause serious friction with U.S. trading partners and raise questions about Trump's commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system. But the options are also legal under U.S. trade law, and the amount of any blowback will depend on how restrictive any measure imposed by Trump is and how many countries are hit.

The first major trade action of 2018 is expected very soon, according to aides. Trump faces statutory deadlines to act by late January and early February in two cases involving solar products and washing machines under Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Expansion Act. The solar decision isn't expected this week but could come the week after, aides said.

In the solar and washing machine cases, the U.S. International Trade Commission has already determined that increased imports are "a substantial cause of serious injury to the domestic industry." That gives Trump the legal basis to impose temporary import restrictions to help the affected companies recover.

All four ITC commissioners recommended four years of relief — which could include tariffs or import quotas — in the solar case brought by Suniva and SolarWorld, but they disagreed on how restrictive it should be.

The commissioners unanimously recommended three years of relief in the washing machine case brought by Whirlpool and later joined by General Electric. All four commissioners also recommended setting a 50 percent tariff on imports of more than 1.2 million units. Two commissioners proposed additional lower tariffs on imports within the 1.2-million-unit quota, while two others said they were not needed.

Trump does not have to follow those recommendations and could set tariffs or quotas wherever he wants, within legal limits. He also could decide to exclude some countries from whatever restrictions he imposes if he wants to specifically target China for punishment.

Trump is also facing upcoming decisions in two cases regarding whether current volumes of steel and aluminum imports harm national security by threatening the future of both domestic industries. Ross, the commerce secretary, must formally transmit his recommendations to Trump by Jan. 15 in the steel case and Jan. 22 in the aluminum case.

Once Trump receives the reports, he has 90 days to decide what, if any, action to take. If the Commerce Department finds a national security threat, Trump has a great deal of discretion over what kind of restrictions to impose.

He could slap a duty or quota restrictions on all steel and aluminum imports from all sources, or he could fashion a more tailored set of remedies to help domestic producers while minimizing the pain felt by other sectors of the economy and trading partners.

Broad restrictions would almost certainly be met with retaliation and potentially challenged at the World Trade Organization. It could also trigger copycat actions, with other countries closing their markets to American goods in the name of national security.

In a separate case, Trump has until August to make up his mind in an investigation examining Chinese policies regarding intellectual property, but he is expected to make a decision early this year.

Lighthizer, the U.S. trade representative, is widely expected to find that Chinese practices have forced American companies to turn over valuable technology and reduced the value of their intellectual property. However, there is some uncertainty about how soon he will propose specific actions against China.

The extent of any action taken by Trump could be determined by the amount of "damages"

Lighthizer uncovers in his investigation. The higher the damages, the greater the amount of retaliation Trump could impose in terms of tariff hikes on Chinese goods or restricting Chinese companies from doing business in certain sectors of the U.S. economy.

Lighthizer has also not ruled out bringing action against China at the World Trade Organization if his investigation uncovers what the United States believes to be violations of WTO rules.

Rachael Bade contributed to this report.

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Army Corps clears wetlands permit for Wisconsin plant touted by Trump [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 01/05/2018 04:34 PM EDT

The Army Corps of Engineers removed a major regulatory hurdle for a new manufacturing plant hailed by President Donald Trump, declaring that a pond and roughly 26 acres of wetlands on the Wisconsin property just a handful of miles from Lake Michigan aren't subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction.

Bringing the Foxconn Technology Group plant, which will make liquid-crystal display screens and related products, has been a top priority for Trump and Republican Gov. Scott Walker. During a July White House [event](#) with the company's chairman, Trump took credit for the company's planned investment, saying, "If I didn't get elected, he definitely would not be spending \$10 billion." Also on hand at the event was House Speaker [Paul Ryan](#), whose district the plant will be in, as well as Walker.

Walker and his administration heavily pursued Foxconn, and he convinced the state Legislature to pass a \$3 billion incentive package in September that included exemptions from key state environmental laws. But the project still needed to navigate federal environmental permitting requirements.

Wetlands permitting stood to be one of the biggest hurdles for the project, as it is for many developments with a large footprint. Clean Water Act permits allowing streams and wetlands to be filled are often the most cumbersome and expensive aspects of the process — a factor that has fueled the long fight over the Obama administration's controversial Waters of the U.S. rule that sought to clarify which streams and wetlands get automatic protection under the law following two muddled Supreme Court opinions.

The property selected by Foxconn for the plant includes several water features that could have triggered permit requirements to shrink or move the project and fund mitigation efforts if the waters had been deemed to be subject to federal jurisdiction.

Consultants working for Foxconn formally applied to the Corps for jurisdictional determinations relating to one section of the property on Dec. 7, although the agency said the two parties had been in communication about the site for several months. The next day, Dec. 8, the Corps issued a final determination that the pond and 42 wetlands on that portion of the site were too isolated from larger downstream waters to merit federal protection.

A pair of determinations for another portion of the site containing a stream that flows year round that is subject to federal permitting requirements is still pending, according to Todd Vesperman, Southeast Section Chief in the St. Paul District's Regulatory Branch. He said the swath of the site with the stream would include water features subject to federal protection, while other wetlands there would be outside of federal reach.

Environmental groups have raised concerns about the Corps decision shielding Foxconn from federal permitting requirements. Tressie Kamp, an attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates, said the group had not yet decided whether it would sue the Corps, but she argued that it was dangerous to rush into such a sweeping project with so little environmental review.

Steph Tai, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School who works with the green group, said he was skeptical about the determination that none of the wetlands were connected to downstream waters, although he didn't have direct knowledge of the site's hydrology. "As a general matter, it would seem like the presence of an actual jurisdictional water on the site, like a tributary, would increase the likelihood of hydrologically connected wetlands elsewhere on the site," he said by email.

Wisconsin once had 10 million acres of wetlands, but today has only half that number. It is one of the handful of states that has stronger state-level protections than those provided by federal law. Following a 2001 Supreme Court ruling that threw into question federal protections for ponds and wetlands that aren't obviously connected to larger downstream waters, Wisconsin put in place its own law protecting such resources at the state level.

But the state Legislature in September passed a special exemption from the state's wetland permitting program, as well as the requirement for an environmental impact statement, a move Walker's administration said would eliminate "duplicative processes." Cathy Stepp, Walker's then-secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, told the Natural Resources board that she wanted to "make sure the regulatory processes and bureaucracy are not in the way of job creation in Wisconsin," according to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

Stepp was named EPA Regional Administrator for the Great Lakes Region by Trump last month after serving a stint as deputy regional administrator of its Kansas City office.

EPA and Army Corps headquarters in Washington have weighed in on the jurisdictional determinations, as is standard when isolated wetlands are at issue, Vesperman said.

The Wisconsin state Legislature is now considering legislation to roll back its stricter protections over isolated wetlands, effectively making the exemption created for Foxconn permanent. Tracy Hames, executive director of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, said that would remove

protections for 1 million of the state's 5 million remaining wetlands.

"The Foxconn site, you could look at it and say it's just a small little property, it doesn't really matter," Hames said. "But what's left now is being removed without any regulatory oversight. And what that gets us is going the wrong way. We should be really working to get wetlands back on our landscape to help handle the [flood] water that we're having to deal with, not removing them."

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GOP firm ends controversial media monitoring contract with EPA [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 12/19/2017 02:32 PM EDT

The Republican media monitoring firm Definers Public Affairs canceled its \$120,000 contract with the Environmental Protection Agency after a media backlash because of the company's links to GOP opposition research firm America Rising.

Earlier this year, America Rising filed several Freedom of Information Act requests for communications from EPA career staffers who had been critical of Administrator Scott Pruitt or President Donald Trump. That [included email](#) sent by John O'Grady, a top union official at the EPA, that "mentions or refers to President Trump."

News reports about the two efforts to monitor news coverage about the agency and dig up information about dissenting staffers stirred new accusations that Pruitt is fostering an atmosphere of paranoia and distrust at EPA.

Definers described the decision to end the contract as mutual, although EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox would not say whether the agency or company initiated the cancellation.

Definers President Joe Pounder [said](#) in a written statement that previous administrations paid more for slower services, but "it's become clear this will become a distraction. As a result, Definers and the EPA have decided to forgo the contract." He added that the firm will not offer its services to any other federal agencies.

Mother Jones first [reported](#) on the contract, and The New York Times [documented](#) the ties between Definers and America Rising, which was also started by Pounder.

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 1/9/2018 6:06:36 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by DaVita: JOE ARPAIO running for AZ-SEN -- GAYLE KING: OPRAH 'intrigued' by idea of running -- TRUMP going to DAVOS -- JOHN DICKERSON to join 'CBS This Morning'

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by DaVita

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

HANGING WITH THE ELITES -- PRESIDENT TRUMP TO DAVOS -- MAGGIE HABERMAN SCOOP: "President Trump is expected to attend the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, in the coming weeks, an administration official said Tuesday.

"In a statement, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, said the president was looking forward to attending the gathering of world leaders and business executives.

"The president welcomes opportunities to advance his America First agenda with world leaders,' Ms. Sanders said. 'At this year's World Economic Forum, the president looks forward to promoting his policies to strengthen American businesses, American industries, and American workers.'" <http://nyti.ms/2mjMObc>

WASHINGTON EXAMINER -- DAVID DRUCKER SCOOP: "Joe Arpaio running for Senate in Arizona": "Republican Joe Arpaio, a close ally of President Trump and former sheriff known for his provocative approach to combatting illegal immigration, is running for Senate in Arizona.

"The 85-year-old Arpaio could shake up the late August Republican primary in a critical open-seat race to replace retiring Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. Trump pardoned Arpaio last summer, sparing the former sheriff jail time after he was convicted of ignoring a federal court order in a racial-profiling case. ...

"I have a lot to offer. I'm a big supporter of President Trump,' Arpaio said. 'I'm going to have to work hard; you don't take anything for granted. But I would not be doing this if I thought that I could not win. I'm not here to get my name in the paper, I get that everyday, anyway.'" <http://washex.am/2CVjUI1>

Good Tuesday morning. BIG EYES EMOJI -- CNN'S BRIAN STELTER: "Oprah Winfrey has 2020 on her mind.

"Winfrey is listening to the high-powered friends who are urging her to challenge President Trump, and her best friend, Gayle King, says she is 'intrigued by the idea.' Three other Winfrey friends told CNNMoney that the media mogul is taking the idea seriously. 'She's listening to a lot of people who are saying: 'You can do this,' one of the sources said on condition of anonymity. 'I don't know what she'll do. She doesn't know yet,' another source said. 'But any way this plays out, this is a long game.'"

BUT...: "King said both, 'I don't think at this point she is actually considering it' and also, 'I also know, after years of watching the Oprah show, you always have the right to change your mind.'" <http://cnnmon.ie/2qliSu5>

-- **@JeffMason1:** ".@realDonaldTrump says he likes @Oprah, could beat her in a presidential race, doesn't think she will run."

JOHN DICKERSON TO REPLACE CHARLIE ROSE ON 'CBS THIS MORNING -- MEMO FROM CBS NEWS PRESIDENT DAVID RHODES: "With John, Gayle, and Norah together we will be doubling down on serious news coverage. That's what we're all committed to at CBS News. Our three co-hosts together will represent those values to the audience every morning. Ryan Kadro is speaking with the 'CBS This Morning' staff now about the plans for Wednesday's broadcast.

"John is relocating to New York full time -- trading one eight-days-a-week job for another. His work is impeccable on television, online, and in print -- he's earned his reputation for substance and preparation as both an interviewer and a field reporter.

"Norah and Gayle noted CTM's sixth anniversary this morning. They have built a tremendous connection with a consistently-growing audience. We're confident that today's announcement will only strengthen their connection. Our co-hosts and the whole 'CBS This Morning? team have done a terrific job through the last six years and especially through this transition.

"John will anchor 'Face the Nation' at least this weekend and we are working with Mary Hager on the important broadcasts leading up to State of the Union later this month. I'll be in Washington part of this week as we start the conversation about what's next for 'Face.' We have terrific correspondents in Washington and we will be ready for whatever comes along." *Yashar Ali's initial scoop on HuffPost* <http://bit.ly/2CSDDJ4>

DICKERSON WILL PHASE OUT OF "FACE THE NATION" -- and the host chair will become one of the hottest commodities in political journalism. **WHO WILL BE IN THE MIX FOR THAT SLOT?** Major Garrett will be a strong internal contender. **OTHER CONTENDERS:** Jon Karl, Alex Wagner. **INTERESTING OPTION:** Bret Baier. **NAMES IN THE MIX:** Margaret Brennan, Julianna Goldman, Bob Costa, Nancy Cordes. **ANOTHER QUESTION --** How about Norah O'Donnell?

BULLETIN -- HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP STEVE SCALISE is having a scheduled

surgery tomorrow. **Statement from Scalise:** "I have been fortunate to make tremendous progress in my healing from last June's shooting, and tomorrow I will undergo a planned surgery as part of my ongoing recovery process. ... I will remain fully engaged in my work as I heal from this procedure, and I look forward to returning to the Capitol as soon as I can within the coming weeks."

***** **A message from DaVita:** The time is now to give thousands of vulnerable patients access to integrated care. Support the PATIENTS Act. MyKidneyCare.org

TRUMP ON IMMIGRATION NEGOTIATIONS, per pooler Melissa Burke of the Detroit News: "POTUS said GOP Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) will be introducing a bill in the coming days. It should be a 'bill of love' but also the country needs stronger borders to stem drugs from coming through, POTUS said. Any bill on DACA needs to close loopholes, end chain migration, and cancel the visa lottery program, POTUS said. ... He'd also like to see merit-based immigration in any bill. ...

"Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said he's been working on the immigration issue for 10 years, and he's for a pathway to citizenship. He urged the group to look more broadly at comprehensive immigration reform. POTUS responded: 'If you want to take it that further step, I'll take the heat,' POTUS said. 'You are not that far away from comprehensive immigration reform.' POTUS a few minutes later said, we can do DACA and tackle comprehensive immigration reform 'the next afternoon.'"

REMEMBER ALEXANDER-MURRAY? -- "Secret Pro-Life Meeting With Mike Pence Killed Obamacare Fix -- For Now," by the Daily Beast's Andrew Desiderio: "Amid opposition from conservatives in the House of Representatives, a group of pro-life activists met with Pence to lobby the Trump administration against supporting a health insurance market stabilization bill on the grounds that it does not contain sufficient language on abortion restrictions, according to sources with direct knowledge of the meeting. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was also in attendance at the Dec. 19 meeting, three of the sources said. The next day, key lawmakers involved in crafting the legislation announced they were punting on the issue until 2018."
<http://thebea.st/2EppdfN>

ABOUT THAT WALL -- "To Pay for Wall, Trump Would Cut Proven Border Security Measures," by NYT's Ron Nixon: "The Trump administration would cut or delay funding for border surveillance, radar technology, patrol boats and customs agents in its upcoming spending plan to curb illegal immigration -- all proven security measures that officials and experts have said are more effective than building a wall along the Mexican border. ... Mr. Trump's budget request for a wall represents more than half of the \$33 billion spending blueprint for border security over the next decade. It either eliminates critical funding for border security programs or shifts money from them, threatening to leave gaping holes. A Government Accountability Office study released last February found that Customs and Border Protection has not shown how much fencing and walls bolster border security." <http://nyti.ms/2CUJUEh>

WAR REPORT -- "As North Korea Tensions Rise, U.S. Army Trains Soldiers To Fight In Tunnels," by NPR's Tom Bowman: "The Army is training thousands more soldiers in tunnel warfare, part of an effort to be ready to offer President Trump military options for North Korea, U.S. officials tell NPR. North Korea is honeycombed with thousands of tunnels and bunkers, some of them discovered leading across the border and close to the South Korean capital, Seoul. Others in North Korea are hundreds of feet deep and used to hide troops and artillery, as well as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

"Along with training thousands more troops, officials say the Pentagon is buying more specialized gear needed for tunnel operations: night-vision goggles and radios, along with acetylene torches and bolt cutters." <http://n.pr/2ErOVR8>

UNDERSTANDING MATTIS -- "Mattis reveals himself in storytelling moments with troops," by the AP's Robert Burns: "[Secretary of Defense James] Mattis, now the Pentagon boss and perhaps the most admired member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, is a storyteller. And at no time do the tales flow more easily than when he's among the breed he identifies with most closely -- the men and women of the military. ... The stories tend to be snippets of Mattis' personal history, including moments he believes illustrate the deeper meaning of military service.

"On a trip last month to the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and three domestic military installations, Mattis revealed himself in ways rarely seen in Washington, where he has studiously maintained a low public profile. With no news media in attendance except one Associated Press reporter, Mattis made clear during his troop visits that he had not come to lecture or to trade on his status as a retired four-star general. 'Let's just shoot the breeze for a few minutes,' he said at one point." <http://bit.ly/2ErcSYB>

SCOTUS WATCH -- "Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with clerk hires, signals desire to outlast Trump," by CNN's Joan Biskupic: "Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg marks her 25th anniversary on the Supreme Court this year, and the cultural icon known as the 'Notorious RBG' recently signaled that she intends to stay at least through 2020 by hiring law clerks for at least two more terms." <http://cnn.it/2CXGBwd>

AT THE DOJ -- "Sessions' DOJ Charged A White Supremacist With Terrorism. They Just Didn't Tell Anyone," by HuffPost's Ryan Reilly: "Usually, when the FBI arrests a terrorist and the Justice Department charges them, it's a big deal. ... Officials will typically blast out a press release, and, if it's a big takedown, might even hold a press conference. The Justice Department didn't do any of that when federal prosecutors unsealed terrorism charges last week against Taylor Michael Wilson. The 26-year-old white supremacist from St. Charles, Missouri, allegedly breached a secure area of an Amtrak train on Oct. 22 while armed with a gun and plenty of backup ammunition. He set off the emergency brake, sending passengers lunging as the train cars went 'completely black.' ...

"There was no press release on the case out of Justice Department headquarters in Washington, nor from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Nebraska. The reporter who broke the story of the terrorism charges on Thursday evening, Lori Pilger of the Lincoln Journal Star, told HuffPost that she spotted the unsealed case when checking the federal court docket online. ...

"On its face, the lack of attention the Wilson case received from Attorney General Jeff Sessions' Justice Department could read as a brazen political decision by Trump administration officials to obscure a terrorism case that doesn't fit into their broader agenda. But the lack of attention the Wilson case has received actually reflects the priorities embedded in a system built up by U.S. lawmakers and law enforcement officials over the years: a U.S. criminal code and federal law enforcement apparatus that treats domestic terrorism as a second-class threat." <http://bit.ly/2ErPSZl>

-- "Attorney General Jeff Sessions Signals Greater Willingness to Use Death Penalty," by WSJ's Nichole Hong and Aruna Viswanatha: "The Justice Department has agreed to seek the federal death penalty in at least two murder cases, in what officials say is the first sign of a heightened effort under Attorney General Jeff Sessions to use capital punishment to further crack down on violent crime. ... The Justice Department under President Donald Trump expects to authorize more death penalty cases than the previous administration did, the official said." <http://on.wsj.com/2FgSVFf>

CAMPAIGN STOP -- "Judge ends consent decree limiting RNC 'ballot security' activities," by Josh Gerstein: "After more than three decades, Republicans are free of a federal court consent decree that sharply limited the Republican National Committee's ability to engage to challenge voters' qualifications and target the kind of fraud President Donald Trump has alleged affected the 2016 presidential race. ... The agreement, which dates to 1982, arose from a Democratic National Committee lawsuit charging the RNC with seeking to discourage African Americans from voting through targeted mailings warning about penalties for violating election laws and by posting armed, off-duty law enforcement officers at the polls in minority neighborhoods." <http://politi.co/2FjENLe>

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT -- "Jeff Bezos Is Now Worth More Than Bill Gates Ever Was," by Bloomberg's Tom Metcalf: "Jeff Bezos's net worth reached \$105.1 billion Monday on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index as Amazon.com Inc. shares added to a 12-month surge that's lifted the online shopping giant's market value by almost 57 percent. ... The latest jump has pushed Bezos's fortune definitively above the high reached by Microsoft Corp.'s Bill Gates in 1999. The Amazon founder passed Gates in October with a net worth of \$93.8 billion and his fortune crossed \$100 billion for the first time a month later when the holiday shopping season kicked off on Black Friday." <https://bloom.bg/2CWcKnG>

MEDIAWATCH -- CNN named **JIM ACOSTA** chief White House correspondent. **Pamela Brown** will also cover the White House as a senior correspondent, moving over from the Justice Department. **Sara Murray** is joining the DoJ team and **Joe Johns** will

cover the midterm elections and national politics.

-- **"Inspired by The Post: A Guide to D.C.'s Journalist Hangouts, Past and Present,"** by Vogue's Jennifer Conrad <http://bit.ly/2ErSOpc>

ATTENTION JOURNALISM STUDENTS -- POLITICO is accepting applications for its fifth session of the POLITICO Journalism Institute (PJI), an educational initiative focused on newsroom diversity. The intensive program, which is designed for college students, will be held May 29 to June 9, 2018. It features hands-on training for up to 12 recent grads and university students interested in covering government and politics. Students also will have an opportunity to have their work published by POLITICO. All expenses are paid for the program, reflecting POLITICO's ongoing support of journalism education, newsroom diversity and recruitment of top-notch talent. Admissions are made on a rolling basis, but no later than Jan. 15. <http://politi.co/2B3VVcw>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Florida kicks off last legislative session of Rick Scott's term -- Massachusetts' big three discuss legislative priorities
<http://politi.co/2FiZze8>

SPOTTED -- Mike Flynn, his wife and his son eating at Royal Restaurant on St. Asaph Street in Alexandria. <http://bit.ly/2FI5tLK>

TRANSITIONS -- Rob Friedlander has started as communications director and senior adviser for Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas). He was previously national press secretary at Earthjustice.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Jon Gold, VP of supply chain and customs policy at the National Retail Federation and a CBP alum, and **Debby Nachmann** on Jan. 1 welcomed Benjamin David Gold, who was born at 5:55 a.m. "He couldn't wait to celebrate New Year's Day with us." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2CVaX1b>

BONUS BIRTHDAYS -- Alex Roarty, reporter at McClatchy ... **Jodi Sakol**, VP for campaign outreach at AARP (hubby tip: Chris Lapetina) ... **(was yesterday): Charles Murray** turned 75 ... **(was Saturday): Kristi Lowe**, Partner at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (hat tip: Anthony DeAngelo, who was on time)

***** **A message from DaVita: SOME OF OUR COUNTRY'S MOST VULNERABLE PATIENTS ARE DEPENDING ON CONGRESS TO DO THE RIGHT THING.** People with kidney disease are among the most critically ill populations in our country, and most of them depend on Medicare. Integrated care can help reduce hospitalizations and improve the lives of thousands of people. **The PATIENTS Act** would expand access to integrated care, allowing dialysis providers, nephrologists and caregivers to better coordinate care for kidney patients. Congress should pass the PATIENTS Act to expand access to integrated care for kidney patients. MyKidneyCare.org *****

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To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Flynn, Mike[Flynn.Mike@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 2:12:31 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

George, that is fine to open up the competitive bidding process, but that needs to happen TODAY. This has been dragging on for weeks and weeks, and we don't need this to take any longer.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 9:13 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

Jahan,

I spoke with our budget team yesterday. Because this would be a \$ 120,000 contract, we cannot move forward without going through a competitive bidding process. In addition, this cost is more than OPA's budget. In the past, we have solicited funds from the program offices to reduce the portion covered by OPA. Other offices have contributed in exchange for receiving the clips once a day.

I can start the process of soliciting funds and competing the contract. If you and Liz want me to proceed, I'll get a time estimate from our budget team.

Our contact at Definers has still not returned my request for a demo. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 8:50 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office[awilson@gop.com]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Tue 4/17/2018 11:04:33 PM
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Of course! We could do lunch May 7, 8, 10, 21, or 25. Let me know what might work!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [mailto:awilson@gop.com]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Unfortunately, the Chairwoman will be on the road for the next few weeks so right now I am looking at something week of May 7th or May 21st. Let me know if there are preferable dates and we can go from there.

Thanks!

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:56 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Got it. We could also do breakfast or coffee if that's easier – really just looking to get them together at some point in the next couple weeks. Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office [<mailto:awilson@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:47 AM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Thanks for reaching out. I know that right now neither of those options will work for the

Chairwoman (we have quite a bit of travel coming up in the next few weeks), but let me speak with our team here and I'll send over a few options.

Thanks,

Alana

Alana P. Wilson

Director of Scheduling | Republican National Committee

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:34 AM
To: Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Alana,

As Mike mentioned that the Chairwoman is out of town this week, wanted to offer Wednesday (25th) or Friday (27th) of next week instead.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Mike Reed - Communications/Research [<mailto:Mreed@gop.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:31 AM
To: Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Alana Wilson - Chairman's Office <awilson@gop.com>
Subject: RE: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Hayley,

Adding Alana to this email. She is the Chairwoman's scheduler. Ronna isn't in D.C. this week, but maybe you guys can find a time at a later date. Will let yall coordinate.

Thanks for reaching out!

Mike

From: Ford, Hayley [<mailto:ford.hayley@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:20 AM
To: Mike Reed - Communications/Research <Mreed@gop.com>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Lunch with Administrator Pruitt

Hi Mike,

I work with Jahan over at the EPA and understand he's spoken to you about getting Ronna McDaniel and Administrator Pruitt together for lunch. The Administrator could do lunch

tomorrow, Wednesday or Friday of this week if Ronna is free any of those days. Let us know if that works or feel free to connect me with her scheduler. We were thinking the Capitol Hill Club would be convenient for her.

Thanks!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison and Personal Aide to the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

To: Beach, Christopher[beach.christopher@epa.gov]; Beck, Nancy[beck.nancy@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Bodine, Susan[bodine.susan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]; Frye, Tony (Robert)[frye.robert@epa.gov]; Gordon, Stephen[gordon.stephen@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Gunasekara, Mandy[Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov]; Hanson, Paige (Catherine)[hanson.catherine@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Kelly, Albert[kelly.albert@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Leopold, Matt[Leopold.Matt@epa.gov]; Letendre, Daisy[letendre.daisy@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Palich, Christian[palich.christian@epa.gov]; Ringel, Aaron[ringel.aaron@epa.gov]; Rodrick, Christian[rodrick.christian@epa.gov]; Ross, David P[ross.davidp@epa.gov]; Shimmin, Kaitlyn[shimmin.kaitlyn@epa.gov]; Wehrum, Bill[Wehrum.Bill@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Yamada, Richard (Yujiro)[yamada.richard@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Wed 4/18/2018 2:03:55 PM
Subject: EPA News Highlights 4.18.18
[EPA News Highlights 4.18.18.docx](#)

EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

CNN: Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail. But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change. Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

The Huffington Post: EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard practice since the Clinton administration." In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted. Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story

detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

Bloomberg BNA: EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements. The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater. "There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades," David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In. Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

Houston Business Journal: EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites. The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release. The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The Hill: Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos. The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions. Environmentalists and public health advocates say the

memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

National News Highlights 4.18.18

The New York Times: Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday. Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders. The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet. Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

The Wall Street Journal: Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family. Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment. With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

The Associated Press: As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller. "We'll not be having this on the floor of the Senate," McConnell said on Fox News. His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it's simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to "poking the bear." The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer's office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is "an attack on our country" and is "corrupt."

TRUMP TWEETS

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/17/politics/scott-pruitt-epa-track-record/index.html>

Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

By Juana Summers, 4/18/18

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail.

But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change.

Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the

environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

Here are some of Pruitt's key changes:

Changing how the EPA approaches climate change

Like others in the Trump administration, Pruitt has repeatedly highlighted uncertainty about the role that humans have played in global warming, a view that is at odds with the vast majority of scientific evidence. Last month, the EPA circulated talking points instructing its staffers to say "clear gaps" exist in understanding whether human activity contributes to climate change. The EPA also removed references to climate change from several webpages, according to an analysis by the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative.

Rolling back car emissions standards

Pruitt announced in early April that he would revise Obama-era greenhouse gas emissions standards for automobiles, a move that undercut a signature part of Obama's efforts to fight climate change.

The weakening of automobile standards, which is a win for car manufacturers and a blow to environmentalists, also sets up a fight between the Trump administration and the state of California, which says it plans to stick with the stricter rules.

Proposing an overhaul of Obama-era initiatives on coal ash

In March, the EPA proposed changes to the Obama-era directive regulating coal ash waste, giving states and utilities more power to manage their own disposal of it. The proposal, according to The Washington Post, includes more than a dozen changes for how coal ash, which remains when coal is burned in power plants and electricity is generated, is stored at coal-fired power plants nationwide, and would let states change how frequently they test for groundwater

contamination.

The decision was praised by industry officials who had called on Pruitt to revisit the rules, but environmental groups said he was caving to special interests in the coal industry.

Withdrawing regulations on 'major sources' of pollution

The EPA announced in January that it was withdrawing the "once-in always-in" policy under the Clean Air Act that dictated how major sources of hazardous air pollutants are regulated. The decades-old policy was opposed by fossil fuel companies, but environmental groups argued that its withdrawal would result in more pollution.

Suspending clean water rule

The EPA announced in January that it would suspend the Waters of the United States rule, which was designed to limit pollution in roughly 60% of the country's bodies of water. Critics said the rule was overly broad in classifying waterways that are subject to federal rules, while supporters see it as a necessary protection, for example, preventing fertilizer runoff from tainting streams and drinking water.

Withdrawing from Clean Power Plan

Pruitt announced in October his decision to withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, the Obama-era rule intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants across the country. The Clean Power Plan had a goal of decreasing the country's carbon pollution by roughly one-third by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Attempting to suspend an Obama-era methane rule

Under Pruitt, the EPA tried to suspend an Obama-era rule to restrict methane emissions from new oil and gas wells. But a federal court ruled in August that the EPA must enforce the Obama administration's regulation.

Pushing to withdraw the US from the Paris climate accord

Pruitt pushed the White House to leave the Paris climate deal, stood beside the President in the Rose Garden when he announced the decision and after the President spoke offered his own remarks. The move was condemned by global leaders and was seen by many as a setback to efforts to address global warming.

The Huffington Post

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/pruitt-emails-epa_us_5ad6701be4b03c426da92c1b

EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

By Alexander Kaufman, 4/17/18

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was “standard practice since the Clinton administration.”

In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted.

Pruitt's email accounts, revealed five days ago by The Washington Post, raised concerns that the EPA failed to disclose emails linked to the secret accounts in public records requests. The controversy added to the rapidly cascading series of corruption scandals and ethical lapses that have caused dozens of Democrats and at least three Republican members of Congress to call for his resignation.

Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

But that didn't quell concerns from Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), a staunch supporter of the Trump administration's environmental agenda, who asked the Pruitt to "affirm that the EPA does in fact search all your official email accounts when responding to FOIA requests" in a letter sent to the administrator Friday.

"During your confirmation hearing, I specifically asked you to 'refrain from taking any action — that makes it difficult or impossible for the public to access your official written communications under the Freedom of Information Act,' " Barrasso wrote to Pruitt, according to a transcript published by The Hill and The Washington Post. "You agreed to my request."

After the Government Accountability Office released a report Monday saying that the \$43,000 the EPA spent on a soundproof phone booth for Pruitt was illegal, Barrasso escalated pressure on the administrator by demanding that he "give a full public accounting of this expenditure and explain why the agency thinks it was complying with the law."

In a separate memo, Wilcox outlined the agency's defenses on the phone booth and another controversy involving five-figure raises given to EPA political appointees under the Safe Drinking Water Act after the White House rejected requests to bump their salaries. The latter scandal blew up two weeks ago when Pruitt struggled to defend himself during a surprisingly aggressive Fox News interview.

Bloomberg BNA

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-to-clarify-when-cities-can-blend-wastewater-1>

EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

By Amena Saiyid, 4/17/18

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater.

“There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades,” David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In.

Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

The EPA’s ban on the practice of blending was struck down in 2013 by a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit decision. Since that ruling, the EPA has chosen to apply the Iowa League of Cities v. EPA in the seven states where the court had jurisdiction, a move that caused much confusion among cities and counties.

The states within the Eighth Circuit’s jurisdiction are Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

“I am not a huge fan of trying to solve through guidance, so we will roll up our sleeves and do rulemaking,” Ross said, adding to expect a proposal sometime this year.

Ross didn’t say whether the agency would apply the federal appellate ruling nationwide instead

of on a case-by-case basis outside the Eighth Circuit. The EPA did acknowledge that it wants to provide regulatory certainty to wastewater facilities so they can “optimize” wastewater treatment during wet weather. That will protect both water quality and public health in the communities they serve.

“We are at the very start of the rulemaking process,” Andrew Sawyers, director of EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, told Bloomberg Environment on the sidelines of the session.

Sawyers said he didn’t want to get ahead of the agency by stating what direction the rulemaking would take. Rather, he emphasized that it would be crafted after engaging with the municipalities that have been affected by the EPA’s past policy.

Cautiously Hopeful

Water and wastewater utilities have been discussing the practice of blending with the EPA and state regulatory agencies for three decades, Rajendra Bhattarai, division manager for Austin Water Utility’s environmental and regulatory services, told Bloomberg Environment, adding the rulemaking has been a “long time” in the making.

Bhattarai said he hopes the EPA’s upcoming rule provides direction on when and how blending should be used.

“It should not be abused, but only be used when needed to avoid damaging the plant’s treatment systems, while protecting public health and environment,” Bhattarai said.

Likewise, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, which represents municipal-owned utilities, wants the EPA to provide clarity around wet weather treatment practices.

“We just don’t know enough about it yet or what they want to do,” Nathan Gardner-Andrews, the association’s chief advocacy officer, told Bloomberg Environment.

Houston Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2018/04/17/epa-removes-houston-area-waste-pits-from-list-of.html>

EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

By Olivia Pulsinelli, 4/17/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites.

The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release.

The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The companies initially opposed the cleanup plan that was approved in October, but they have now agreed to foot the \$115 million bill, per the Tribune. The plan includes installing engineering controls before excavating approximately 212,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated material for disposal, per the April 9 release. The remedial design is expected to take about 29 months, and International Paper Co. and MIMC will perform the design work under the oversight of the EPA and the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality. While the remedial design is underway, the U.S. Department of Justice and the EPA will begin negotiating with the potential responsible parties regarding construction of the remedy, per the April 9 release.

Quarterly inspection and maintenance of the existing temporary cap will continue during the process, per the release.

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site consists of two sets of pits, called impoundments, built in the mid-1960s. They were used to dispose of solid and liquid pulp and paper mill wastes contaminated with dioxins and furans but were covered with an armored cap as a temporary containment method in 2011. The 14-acre northern set of impoundments is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, north of the Interstate 10 bridge, and is partially submerged. The southern impoundment covers less than 20 acres on a small peninsula south of the I-10 bridge.

The site was added to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites in 2008.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/383661-trumps-epa-quietly-revamps-rules-for-air-pollution>

Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

By Tim Cama, 4/18/18

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos.

The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions.

Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

"All of these, individually and taken together, will result in more air pollution and less

enforcement of the Clean Air Act,” said Paul Billings, senior vice president for advocacy at the American Lung Association.

“These were radical departures of current law when they were proposed a decade ago and they’re just as radical today,” he said, referring to the Bush-era efforts, some of which were unsuccessful, to make changes to EPA air programs.

But for the EPA and its supporters, the memos simply bring the agency back to what the relevant laws and regulations are meant to be.

“They address specific concerns that people have had for years, and just make it much simpler for people to comply — especially for existing [facilities] — to make sure they can maintain their plants and replace worn-out components and those types of things, without the threat of enforcement litigation,” said Jeff Holmstead, a former head of the EPA’s air pollution office under the George W. Bush administration who now represents regulated companies at the law and lobbying firm Bracewell.

Bill Wehrum, head of the air office under EPA chief Scott Pruitt, wrote two of the three EPA memos. He recused himself from the third memo, which Pruitt wrote.

The first memo, issued in December, states that the EPA will no longer “second guess” companies’ calculations of their expected pollution output after certain big projects under what is known as New Source Review. Under that program, the EPA reviews the changes made to a facility to decide whether they need to go through the same process as if the facility were newly built.

The December memo effectively means the EPA will usually not take action against a company for its calculations if they turn out to be wrong.

The second memo, issued in January, repeals a Clinton-era policy known as “once in, always in.” Under the previous policy, facilities could never be considered “minor” sources of hazardous pollution if they were already considered “major” sources, and subject to much stricter rules.

Now, facilities can be regulated as “minor” if their emissions drop enough.

The third memo allows companies to use a procedure known as “project netting” when applying for permits for major projects under the New Source Review program. That means companies can use a more industry-friendly emissions calculation when they argue that a particular project would reduce emissions.

President Trump added to the memos last week, signing one himself that formally asks the EPA to use more industry-friendly practices in enforcing the National Ambient Air Quality Standards program, a key Clean Air Act program for air quality nationwide.

John Walke, director for clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the EPA is working to implement the policies the Bush administration failed to finish.

“I think Mr. Wehrum has decided this is likely a one-term administration and he’s going to devote his full resources to rolling back clean air, climate and public health protections in the time available to him,” Walke said.

“The most expedient and hasty way to accomplish those rollbacks is through the regular guidance documents that we have seen so far from EPA,” he said. “Rulemakings take time, they require public notice and input and hearings, and Mr. Wehrum and Mr. Pruitt plainly have no patience for those tedious foddors.”

Walke said that, taken together, the memos could allow polluting facilities to greatly increase their emissions.

The EPA didn’t respond to requests for comment.

The focus among the memos for environmental and health advocates is the one repealing the “once in, always in” policy, and letting “major” pollution sources reduce their emissions and be regulated as “minor” ones.

A coalition of environmental groups sued the EPA to stop the policy change, arguing that it should have gone through the full regulatory process, including analysis of its environmental impact and an opportunity for public comment. Democratic states joined in with their own lawsuit.

“Instead of prioritizing the health of hard-working Americans, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt wants to let major polluters off the hook. That is unconscionable, and it is illegal,” said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D).

“If the ‘Once In, Always In’ policy is rescinded, children in California and around the country — particularly those who must live near the polluting plant or factory — may grow up in an environment with tons of additional hazardous pollutants in the air they breathe. California will not allow that to happen,” Becerra said.

Two environmental groups opposed to the EPA’s move have put out recent analyses of the change, focused on specific areas of the country.

The Environmental Integrity Project looked at 12 industrial plants in the Midwest and concluded they could increase their pollution to 540,000 pounds annually, a fourfold growth.

The Environmental Defense Fund looked at the Houston area, and said that 18 facilities there could increase their emissions to 900,000 pounds a year, two and a half times current levels.

Holmstead said opponents of the Trump administration’s policy are unlikely to prevail. The Supreme Court ruled in the 2015 *Perez v. Mortgage Bankers Association* case that federal agencies can repeal policy memos with other policy memos and don’t have to go through the full regulatory process to do so.

“I think the environmental groups are going to have a real uphill battle trying to get through court that this is somehow improper,” he said. “That really does fly in the face of the Perez decision.”

As for the increase in emissions, Holmstead said environmentalists are wrong. In many cases, the new policies will allow facilities to carry out projects that reduce emissions, or simply operate under a lower paperwork burden.

“They have yet to come up with any real-world examples of how that might happen,” Holmstead said of the scenarios in which pollution might increase. “These reforms are not going to lead to pollution increases.

“I don’t think that there will be a meaningful impact one way or another.”

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/world/asia/trump-japan-north-korea-summit-talks.html>

Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

By Mark Lander and Matt Rosenberg, 4/17/18

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo’s mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at “extremely high levels,” and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders.

The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet.

Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump also said he would give his blessing to North and South Korea to "discuss the end of the war" when the leaders of those countries meet this month, opening the door to a peace treaty that would replace the armistice that halted the Korean War in 1953.

His statements, which came as he welcomed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to his oceanfront estate here, were fresh evidence of a diplomatic thaw underway on the Korean Peninsula, and made a once-unthinkable encounter between him and Mr. Kim far more likely.

The president did not specify who in his administration was talking to North Korea, nor did he give any hint of the sites under consideration — adding to the aura of mystery that has enveloped this potential meeting. The Washington Post first reported Mr. Pompeo's trip, which took place over Easter.

But his comments could raise other thorny issues. A peace treaty with North Korea would greatly increase pressure to ease economic sanctions on the North and to withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula. It would also complicate the already tangled diplomacy in East Asia.

In his meeting with Mr. Abe, however, Mr. Trump projected optimism. He described North Korea in language worlds away from the speech he gave in November in Seoul, when he called it cruel and barbaric, "the results of a tragic experiment in a laboratory of history."

“I really believe there’s a lot of good will,” Mr. Trump said. “They do respect us. We are respectful of them.”

He even suggested that the North and the South might announce some kind of deal before he met Mr. Kim.

On Tuesday, a South Korean newspaper, Munhwa Ilbo, reported that the two countries were negotiating an announcement “to ease military tensions and end a military confrontation,” as part of the summit meeting planned between Mr. Kim and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea.

That could involve pulling troops out of the Demilitarized Zone, making it a genuinely “Demilitarized Zone.” A South Korean government official later played down the report, saying it was too soon to tell what a joint statement by Mr. Moon and Mr. Kim would contain, other than broad and “abstract” statements about the need for North Korea to “denuclearize.”

But analysts said South Korea was aiming for a comprehensive deal, in which the North agreed to give up its weapons in return for a security guarantee, including a peace treaty. Mr. Trump’s comments suggested he backed that effort.

“They do have my blessing to discuss the end of the war,” he said. “People don’t realize that the Korean War has not ended. It’s going on right now. And they are discussing an end to war. Subject to a deal, they have my blessing.”

While Mr. Abe lavished praise on Mr. Trump for the sanctions campaign, which he said had brought North Korea to the table, he did not repeat the president’s words about an end to the Korean War.

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“Donald,” he said, “you’ve demonstrated your unwavering determination in addressing the challenge of North Korea.”

Mr. Abe said only that he hoped that the talks with Mr. Kim would force the North to address the threats posed by its nuclear and missile programs, as well as its abduction of Japanese citizens — a politically resonant issue in Japan that Mr. Trump promised to raise with Mr. Kim.

“Abe put on a surprisingly brave face,” said Michael J. Green, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who advised President George W. Bush on North Korea. “The president of the United States just endorsed a peace treaty with North Korea, a declared nuclear weapons state, and they offered nothing in return.”

China, which is a signer to the 1953 armistice, has long favored a peace treaty. But Japan, which did not sign it, is suspicious of one — as are some foreign policy experts in the United States, who point out that the North has yet to take any tangible steps to give up its nuclear arsenal.

The idea of a peace treaty is not new. The United States and North Korea discussed it in the 1990s and again in 2005. But it has never gone anywhere, largely because North Korea has reneged on pledges to give up its nuclear program.

Most scholars and officials agree that North and South Korea cannot themselves announce an end to the Korean War. It has to involve the United States and China as well, since both were signers to the armistice.

In welcoming Mr. Abe to his estate, Mar-a-Lago, for two days of meetings, Mr. Trump clearly hoped to change the subject from tampered documents, confiscated legal files and other symbols of the political storm clouds that hover over both leaders back home.

After days of ominous reports about his personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, and unflattering descriptions in a new book by James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he ousted, Mr. Trump

appeared to savor the prospect of discussing trade and the nuclear threat from North Korea with Mr. Abe, whom he described in Twitter as a “truly fine gentleman.”

The stakes are even higher for Mr. Abe, whose political survival is in doubt after two domestic scandals have sapped his approval ratings and raised questions about whether he will be forced to resign.

Mr. Abe has invested heavily in his relationship with Mr. Trump, whom he first visited at Trump Tower even before he was sworn in. Preserving that relationship, in the face of fresh challenges in trade and from North Korea, could affect Mr. Abe’s standing in Japan.

The White House sought to put a good face on the meeting, describing Japan as a great ally of the United States and Mr. Abe as a friend of Mr. Trump. But officials acknowledged there would be differences over trade, with Mr. Trump pushing for a trade deal between the two countries and Mr. Abe stung by Mr. Trump’s decision not to exempt Japan, like other American allies, from sweeping tariffs on steel exports.

“We have certain disagreements with respect to some of the trading issues,” Larry Kudlow, Mr. Trump’s chief economic adviser, told reporters before the meeting. “We’ll iron those out, hopefully.”

Mr. Kudlow said he expected Mr. Abe to petition Mr. Trump to grant Japan an exemption, but declined to predict how he would respond. He also tamped down expectations about the United States rejoining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade pact, now anchored by Japan, which Mr. Trump pulled out of during his first week in office.

“We are in the pre-preliminary stages of any discussions,” he said. “It’s more of a thought than a policy.”

Having met six times — including once before at Mar-a-Lago — and spoken by phone 20 times, Mr. Trump and Mr. Abe were likely to talk about the issues dogging them at home, officials said. But American officials said they did not believe that would dominate their discussions.

“It’s all part and parcel of the relationship,” said Matthew Pottinger, the senior director for Asia at the National Security Council. “Sometimes they talk about the respective politics in each other’s countries. They enjoy talking about it.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/barbara-bush-dies-at-age-92-1524008885>

Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

By Gerald Seib, 4/17/18

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America’s most prominent political family.

Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family’s home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment.

With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation’s 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

Instead, the nation came to know her as the widely admired and humorous matron of a large and expanding extended family, which gathered regularly at its compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, for seemingly endless rounds of boating, fishing and golf.

She also proved more combative and less forgiving than her husband in challenging political

foes or perceived press slights, and appeared more embittered by his loss in a re-election bid in 1992. When meeting her successor as first lady, Hillary Clinton, she pointed to the reporters watching them and declared: "Avoid this crowd like the plague. And if they quote you, make damn sure they heard you."

Barbara Bush, Former First Lady, Dies at Age 92

Former first lady Barbara Bush has died at the age of 92. She was the wife of 41st president George H.W. Bush, mother of 43rd president, George W. Bush, and 2016 candidate Jeb Bush. During and after her time in the White House she championed the cause of improving literacy rates among Americans. Photo: Reuters

After the Bushes left the White House, one of their children, George W. Bush, became governor of Texas and another, Jeb, became governor of Florida. She strongly supported both, as she did the candidacy of George W. Bush when he was elected president in 2000.

Ahead of Jeb Bush mounting his own, ultimately unsuccessful campaign for the presidency, Mrs. Bush didn't sound enthusiastic about seeing her family through political wars, famously declaring that "we've had enough Bushes" in the White House. Once he entered the 2016 race, however, she became a visible supporter.

Barbara Bush was born Barbara Pierce in 1925 and grew up in the suburban town of Rye, N.Y. Her father, Marvin, was a successful business executive who became president of McCall Corp.

She was attending a boarding school in South Carolina when, during a visit back home over Christmas break, she met her future husband, then a senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., at a dance. She was 16 years old. They became engaged a year and a half later.

World War II intervened to delay the wedding, however. Her fiancé went off to the Pacific as a U.S. Navy torpedo-bomber pilot, where he was shot down and rescued.

When he returned on leave, Barbara Pierce dropped out of Smith College, and they were married in 1945. Later, she recalled: “I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell my children that they just about throw up.”

After her husband graduated from Yale, the two moved to Texas, where he launched into the oil business and she managed a growing family. Tragedy struck when their daughter Robin, not yet four, died of leukemia. The loss led to a lifelong Bush family devotion to the cause of cancer research.

Her husband veered into politics and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, beginning a steady climb up the political ladder. He went on to become ambassador to the United Nations, envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice president and then president.

Throughout, Mrs. Bush was the crucial, supportive spouse. By her count, she managed some 30 moves by the Bush family.

After the biggest of those moves, into the White House, she said the nation came to see her as “everybody’s grandma,” and she enjoyed a burst of popularity. In a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll taken in early 1992, 70% of Americans said they had a positive view of her—25 points higher than those who had positive views of her husband.

When Mr. Bush was voted out of office, the couple retreated to their longtime home in Houston, while continuing their annual summer trips to Kennebunkport. She remained active in the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

She largely sought to stay out of the national political debate, though she emerged in 2016 to appear with her son Jeb in a joint interview with CBS News designed to promote his campaign.

In that, she offered him this typically pointed critique of his debate performances: “He’s almost too polite...If I gave him advice I would say ‘Why don’t you interrupt like the other people do?’”

Then, without naming Donald Trump, she got in a dig at the man who ultimately prevailed in that campaign by comparing her son favorably to him: “He does not brag like some people we know.”

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/bfb5ad674cec4f90b75b5f790d30eb89/As-GOP-balks,-McConnell-shuts-down-bill-to-protect-Mueller>

As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 4/18/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller’s job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller.

“We’ll not be having this on the floor of the Senate,” McConnell said on Fox News.

His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it’s simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to “poking the bear.”

The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump’s 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer’s office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is “an attack on our country” and is “corrupt.”

Trump has also privately pondered firing Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is

overseeing Mueller's investigation.

Within a day of Trump's criticism, Republicans Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina combined two bills they introduced last summer to protect special counsels. They introduced the new bill along with Democratic Sens. Chris Coons of Delaware and Cory Booker of New Jersey, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, announced that his committee would vote on the bill.

The legislation would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing, and would put into law existing Justice Department regulations that require a firing to be for "good cause."

Democrats immediately jumped on the legislation, but many Republicans have been cool to it.

At least three of the 11 GOP members of the Judiciary panel have said they will vote against it and another five have said they have questions about its constitutionality. Grassley is one of those with concerns, but said he felt obligated to hold a vote.

Republicans off the committee had questions too — and some acknowledged that it could be politically difficult.

South Dakota Sen. Mike Rounds said Tuesday that Trump should make the decision on his own and be responsible for the consequences.

"I think having Congress tell him what we believe he should do in this case is simply poking the bear, and I'd just prefer not to do that," Rounds said.

Oklahoma Sen. Jim Lankford said the bill is a "political distraction."

“You create this whole constitutional political stir over something that is not going to happen,” he said.

Others said there was little point.

“It’s about as popular as cholera with the leader in the Senate and it’s about as popular as malaria in the House,” said Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a member of the Judiciary panel. “I think most people think we’re picking an unnecessary fight with the president.”

Coons bristled at the criticism that the legislation is unconstitutional, noting that several courts have upheld similar special counsel statutes.

“If I were convinced this were unconstitutional, I would not be moving it,” said Coons, a lawyer.

At a September hearing on the two separate bills, before they were combined, scholars were divided on whether the bills were constitutional, with some voicing concerns that allowing the judicial branch that authority over an executive decision may not pass muster in the courts.

“I think it’s probably unconstitutional and I don’t think there’s any realistic chance that the president will fire Mr. Mueller,” Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate and the former Texas attorney general, said Tuesday.

McConnell agreed, adding that Trump would never support the legislation.

“Just as a practical matter, even if we pass it, why would he sign it?” McConnell said in the Fox interview.

Republicans who have talked to the White House almost uniformly have held the line that Trump will not fire Mueller or Rosenstein — including Tillis and Graham, who say they are pushing the legislation because it would be good policy under any president.

“I don’t think he’s going to fire Mueller, but I think institutionally it would be nice to have some protections,” Graham said Tuesday.

Tillis acknowledged last week that he had taken some “heat” from conservatives for the bill, but told the Judiciary panel, “this is really an opportunity to take an ethical stand, and not do it when the situation benefits you.”

Democrats said Republicans opposed to the legislation were simply protecting Trump.

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said the argument over constitutionality is a “red herring used by some of my colleagues as a pretext for opposing the bill, when they really have other reasons.” He gave no specifics.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said the special counsel bill is “so much more” than another policy debate.

“I think this will be one that history will judge us all,” Warner said.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!

15K 6.6K 26K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!

5.4K 12K 41K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

A sketch years later about a nonexistent man. A total con job, playing the Fake News Media for Fools (but they know it)!



Deplorably Scottish @ShennaFoxMusic

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

Oops! This is awkward!
@StormyDaniels's Ex 🙄
#IDTheThug

11K 7.7K 25K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

There is a Revolution going on in California. Soooo many Sanctuary areas want OUT of this ridiculous, crime infested & breeding concept. Jerry Brown is trying to back out of the National Guard at the Border, but the people of the State are not happy. Want Security & Safety NOW!

8.2K 11K 44K

EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

CNN: Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail. But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change. Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

The Huffington Post: EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard practice since the Clinton administration." In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted. Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

Bloomberg BNA: EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements. The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater. "There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades," David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In. Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

Houston Business Journal: EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites. The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release. The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The Hill: Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos. The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions. Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

National News Highlights 4.18.18

The New York Times: Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday. Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders. The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet. Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

The Wall Street Journal: Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family. Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment. With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

The Associated Press: As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller. "We'll not be having this on the floor of the Senate," McConnell said on Fox News. His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it's simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to "poking the bear." The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer's office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is "an attack on our country" and is "corrupt."

TRUMP TWEETS

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/17/politics/scott-pruitt-epa-track-record/index.html>

Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

By Juana Summers, 4/18/18

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail.

But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change.

Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

Here are some of Pruitt's key changes:

Changing how the EPA approaches climate change

Like others in the Trump administration, Pruitt has repeatedly highlighted uncertainty about the role that humans have played in global warming, a view that is at odds with the vast majority of scientific evidence. Last month, the EPA circulated talking points instructing its staffers to say "clear gaps" exist in understanding whether human activity contributes to climate change. The EPA also removed references to climate change from several webpages, according to an analysis by the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative.

Rolling back car emissions standards

Pruitt announced in early April that he would revise Obama-era greenhouse gas emissions standards for automobiles, a move that undercut a signature part of Obama's efforts to fight climate change.

The weakening of automobile standards, which is a win for car manufacturers and a blow to environmentalists, also sets up a fight between the Trump administration and the state of California, which says it plans to stick with the stricter rules.

Proposing an overhaul of Obama-era initiatives on coal ash

In March, the EPA proposed changes to the Obama-era directive regulating coal ash waste, giving states and utilities more power to manage their own disposal of it. The proposal, according to The Washington Post, includes more than a dozen changes for how coal ash, which remains when coal is burned in power plants and electricity is generated, is stored at coal-fired power plants nationwide, and would let states change how frequently they test for groundwater contamination.

The decision was praised by industry officials who had called on Pruitt to revisit the rules, but environmental groups said he was caving to special interests in the coal industry.

Withdrawing regulations on 'major sources' of pollution

The EPA announced in January that it was withdrawing the "once-in always-in" policy under the Clean Air Act that dictated how major sources of hazardous air pollutants are regulated. The decades-old policy was opposed by fossil fuel companies, but environmental groups argued that its withdrawal would result in more pollution.

Suspending clean water rule

The EPA announced in January that it would suspend the Waters of the United States rule, which was designed to limit pollution in roughly 60% of the country's bodies of water. Critics said the rule was overly broad in classifying waterways that are subject to federal rules, while supporters see it as a necessary protection, for example, preventing fertilizer runoff from tainting streams and drinking water.

Withdrawing from Clean Power Plan

Pruitt announced in October his decision to withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, the Obama-era rule intended to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants across the country. The Clean Power Plan had a goal of decreasing the country's carbon pollution by roughly one-third by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Attempting to suspend an Obama-era methane rule

Under Pruitt, the EPA tried to suspend an Obama-era rule to restrict methane emissions from new oil and gas wells. But a federal court ruled in August that the EPA must enforce the Obama administration's regulation.

Pushing to withdraw the US from the Paris climate accord

Pruitt pushed the White House to leave the Paris climate deal, stood beside the President in the Rose Garden when he announced the decision and after the President spoke offered his own remarks. The move was condemned by global leaders and was seen by many as a setback to efforts to address global warming.

The Huffington Post

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/pruitt-emails-epa_us_5ad6701be4b03c426da92c1b

EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

By Alexander Kaufman, 4/17/18

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard practice since the Clinton administration."

In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted.

Pruitt's email accounts, revealed five days ago by The Washington Post, raised concerns that the EPA failed to disclose emails linked to the secret accounts in public records requests. The controversy added to the rapidly cascading series of corruption scandals and ethical lapses that have caused dozens of Democrats and at least three Republican members of Congress to call for his resignation.

Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

But that didn't quell concerns from Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), a staunch supporter of the Trump administration's environmental agenda, who asked the Pruitt to "affirm that the EPA does in fact search all your official email accounts when responding to FOIA requests" in a letter sent to the administrator Friday.

"During your confirmation hearing, I specifically asked you to 'refrain from taking any action — that makes it difficult or impossible for the public to access your official written communications under the Freedom of Information Act,' " Barrasso wrote to Pruitt, according to a transcript published by The Hill and The Washington Post. "You agreed to my request."

After the Government Accountability Office released a report Monday saying that the \$43,000 the EPA spent on a soundproof phone booth for Pruitt was illegal, Barrasso escalated pressure on the administrator by demanding that he "give a full public accounting of this expenditure and explain why the agency thinks it was complying with the law."

In a separate memo, Wilcox outlined the agency's defenses on the phone booth and another controversy involving five-figure raises given to EPA political appointees under the Safe Drinking Water Act after the White House rejected requests to bump their salaries. The latter scandal blew up two weeks ago when Pruitt struggled to defend himself

during a surprisingly aggressive Fox News interview.

Bloomberg BNA

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-to-clarify-when-cities-can-blend-wastewater-1>

EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

By Amena Saiyid, 4/17/18

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater.

“There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades,” David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In.

Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

The EPA’s ban on the practice of blending was struck down in 2013 by a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit decision. Since that ruling, the EPA has chosen to apply the Iowa League of Cities v. EPA in the seven states where the court had jurisdiction, a move that caused much confusion among cities and counties.

The states within the Eighth Circuit’s jurisdiction are Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

“I am not a huge fan of trying to solve through guidance, so we will roll up our sleeves and do rulemaking,” Ross said, adding to expect a proposal sometime this year.

Ross didn’t say whether the agency would apply the federal appellate ruling nationwide instead of on a case-by-case basis outside the Eighth Circuit. The EPA did acknowledge that it wants to provide regulatory certainty to wastewater facilities so they can “optimize” wastewater treatment during wet weather. That will protect both water quality and public health in the communities they serve.

“We are at the very start of the rulemaking process,” Andrew Sawyers, director of EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, told Bloomberg Environment on the sidelines of the session.

Sawyers said he didn’t want to get ahead of the agency by stating what direction the rulemaking would take. Rather, he emphasized that it would be crafted after engaging with the municipalities that have been affected by the EPA’s past policy.

Cautiously Hopeful

Water and wastewater utilities have been discussing the practice of blending with the EPA and state regulatory agencies for three decades, Rajendra Bhattarai, division manager for Austin Water Utility’s environmental and regulatory services, told Bloomberg Environment, adding the rulemaking has been a “long time” in the making.

Bhattarai said he hopes the EPA’s upcoming rule provides direction on when and how blending should be used.

“It should not be abused, but only be used when needed to avoid damaging the plant’s treatment systems, while

protecting public health and environment,” Bhattarai said.

Likewise, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, which represents municipal-owned utilities, wants the EPA to provide clarity around wet weather treatment practices.

“We just don’t know enough about it yet or what they want to do,” Nathan Gardner-Andrews, the association’s chief advocacy officer, told Bloomberg Environment.

Houston Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2018/04/17/epa-removes-houston-area-waste-pits-from-list-of.html>

EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

By Olivia Pulsinelli, 4/17/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites.

The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release.

The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The companies initially opposed the cleanup plan that was approved in October, but they have now agreed to foot the \$115 million bill, per the Tribune. The plan includes installing engineering controls before excavating approximately 212,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated material for disposal, per the April 9 release. The remedial design is expected to take about 29 months, and International Paper Co. and MIMC will perform the design work under the oversight of the EPA and the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality. While the remedial design is underway, the U.S. Department of Justice and the EPA will begin negotiating with the potential responsible parties regarding construction of the remedy, per the April 9 release.

Quarterly inspection and maintenance of the existing temporary cap will continue during the process, per the release. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site consists of two sets of pits, called impoundments, built in the mid-1960s. They were used to dispose of solid and liquid pulp and paper mill wastes contaminated with dioxins and furans but were covered with an armored cap as a temporary containment method in 2011. The 14-acre northern set of impoundments is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, north of the Interstate 10 bridge, and is partially submerged. The southern impoundment covers less than 20 acres on a small peninsula south of the I-10 bridge.

The site was added to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites in 2008.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/383661-trumps-epa-quietly-revamps-rules-for-air-pollution>

Trump’s EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

By Tim Cama, 4/18/18

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos.

The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions.

Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

"All of these, individually and taken together, will result in more air pollution and less enforcement of the Clean Air Act," said Paul Billings, senior vice president for advocacy at the American Lung Association.

"These were radical departures of current law when they were proposed a decade ago and they're just as radical today," he said, referring to the Bush-era efforts, some of which were unsuccessful, to make changes to EPA air programs.

But for the EPA and its supporters, the memos simply bring the agency back to what the relevant laws and regulations are meant to be.

"They address specific concerns that people have had for years, and just make it much simpler for people to comply — especially for existing [facilities] — to make sure they can maintain their plants and replace worn-out components and those types of things, without the threat of enforcement litigation," said Jeff Holmstead, a former head of the EPA's air pollution office under the George W. Bush administration who now represents regulated companies at the law and lobbying firm Bracewell.

Bill Wehrum, head of the air office under EPA chief Scott Pruitt, wrote two of the three EPA memos. He recused himself from the third memo, which Pruitt wrote.

The first memo, issued in December, states that the EPA will no longer "second guess" companies' calculations of their expected pollution output after certain big projects under what is known as New Source Review. Under that program, the EPA reviews the changes made to a facility to decide whether they need to go through the same process as if the facility were newly built.

The December memo effectively means the EPA will usually not take action against a company for its calculations if they turn out to be wrong.

The second memo, issued in January, repeals a Clinton-era policy known as "once in, always in." Under the previous policy, facilities could never be considered "minor" sources of hazardous pollution if they were already considered "major" sources, and subject to much stricter rules.

Now, facilities can be regulated as "minor" if their emissions drop enough.

The third memo allows companies to use a procedure known as "project netting" when applying for permits for major projects under the New Source Review program. That means companies can use a more industry-friendly emissions calculation when they argue that a particular project would reduce emissions.

President Trump added to the memos last week, signing one himself that formally asks the EPA to use more industry-friendly practices in enforcing the National Ambient Air Quality Standards program, a key Clean Air Act program for air quality nationwide.

John Walke, director for clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the EPA is working to implement the policies the Bush administration failed to finish.

"I think Mr. Wehrum has decided this is likely a one-term administration and he's going to devote his full resources to rolling back clean air, climate and public health protections in the time available to him," Walke said.

"The most expedient and hasty way to accomplish those rollbacks is through the regular guidance documents that we have seen so far from EPA," he said. "Rulemakings take time, they require public notice and input and hearings, and Mr. Wehrum and Mr. Pruitt plainly have no patience for those tedious foddors."

Walke said that, taken together, the memos could allow polluting facilities to greatly increase their emissions.

The EPA didn't respond to requests for comment.

The focus among the memos for environmental and health advocates is the one repealing the "once in, always in" policy, and letting "major" pollution sources reduce their emissions and be regulated as "minor" ones.

A coalition of environmental groups sued the EPA to stop the policy change, arguing that it should have gone through the full regulatory process, including analysis of its environmental impact and an opportunity for public comment. Democratic states joined in with their own lawsuit.

"Instead of prioritizing the health of hard-working Americans, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt wants to let major polluters off the hook. That is unconscionable, and it is illegal," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D).

"If the 'Once In, Always In' policy is rescinded, children in California and around the country — particularly those who must live near the polluting plant or factory — may grow up in an environment with tons of additional hazardous pollutants in the air they breathe. California will not allow that to happen," Becerra said.

Two environmental groups opposed to the EPA's move have put out recent analyses of the change, focused on specific areas of the country.

The Environmental Integrity Project looked at 12 industrial plants in the Midwest and concluded they could increase their pollution to 540,000 pounds annually, a fourfold growth.

The Environmental Defense Fund looked at the Houston area, and said that 18 facilities there could increase their emissions to 900,000 pounds a year, two and a half times current levels.

Holmstead said opponents of the Trump administration's policy are unlikely to prevail. The Supreme Court ruled in the 2015 *Perez v. Mortgage Bankers Association* case that federal agencies can repeal policy memos with other policy memos and don't have to go through the full regulatory process to do so.

"I think the environmental groups are going to have a real uphill battle trying to get through court that this is somehow improper," he said. "That really does fly in the face of the *Perez* decision."

As for the increase in emissions, Holmstead said environmentalists are wrong. In many cases, the new policies will allow facilities to carry out projects that reduce emissions, or simply operate under a lower paperwork burden.

"They have yet to come up with any real-world examples of how that might happen," Holmstead said of the scenarios in which pollution might increase. "These reforms are not going to lead to pollution increases.

"I don't think that there will be a meaningful impact one way or another."

Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

By Mark Lander and Matt Rosenberg, 4/17/18

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders.

The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet.

Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump also said he would give his blessing to North and South Korea to "discuss the end of the war" when the leaders of those countries meet this month, opening the door to a peace treaty that would replace the armistice that halted the Korean War in 1953.

His statements, which came as he welcomed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to his oceanfront estate here, were fresh evidence of a diplomatic thaw underway on the Korean Peninsula, and made a once-unthinkable encounter between him and Mr. Kim far more likely.

The president did not specify who in his administration was talking to North Korea, nor did he give any hint of the sites under consideration — adding to the aura of mystery that has enveloped this potential meeting. The Washington Post first reported Mr. Pompeo's trip, which took place over Easter.

But his comments could raise other thorny issues. A peace treaty with North Korea would greatly increase pressure to ease economic sanctions on the North and to withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula. It would also complicate the already tangled diplomacy in East Asia.

In his meeting with Mr. Abe, however, Mr. Trump projected optimism. He described North Korea in language worlds away from the speech he gave in November in Seoul, when he called it cruel and barbaric, "the results of a tragic experiment in a laboratory of history."

"I really believe there's a lot of good will," Mr. Trump said. "They do respect us. We are respectful of them."

He even suggested that the North and the South might announce some kind of deal before he met Mr. Kim.

On Tuesday, a South Korean newspaper, Munhwa Ilbo, reported that the two countries were negotiating an announcement "to ease military tensions and end a military confrontation," as part of the summit meeting planned between Mr. Kim and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea.

That could involve pulling troops out of the Demilitarized Zone, making it a genuinely "Demilitarized Zone." A South Korean government official later played down the report, saying it was too soon to tell what a joint statement by Mr.

Moon and Mr. Kim would contain, other than broad and “abstract” statements about the need for North Korea to “denuclearize.”

But analysts said South Korea was aiming for a comprehensive deal, in which the North agreed to give up its weapons in return for a security guarantee, including a peace treaty. Mr. Trump’s comments suggested he backed that effort.

“They do have my blessing to discuss the end of the war,” he said. “People don’t realize that the Korean War has not ended. It’s going on right now. And they are discussing an end to war. Subject to a deal, they have my blessing.”

While Mr. Abe lavished praise on Mr. Trump for the sanctions campaign, which he said had brought North Korea to the table, he did not repeat the president’s words about an end to the Korean War.

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“Donald,” he said, “you’ve demonstrated your unwavering determination in addressing the challenge of North Korea.”

Mr. Abe said only that he hoped that the talks with Mr. Kim would force the North to address the threats posed by its nuclear and missile programs, as well as its abduction of Japanese citizens — a politically resonant issue in Japan that Mr. Trump promised to raise with Mr. Kim.

“Abe put on a surprisingly brave face,” said Michael J. Green, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who advised President George W. Bush on North Korea. “The president of the United States just endorsed a peace treaty with North Korea, a declared nuclear weapons state, and they offered nothing in return.”

China, which is a signer to the 1953 armistice, has long favored a peace treaty. But Japan, which did not sign it, is suspicious of one — as are some foreign policy experts in the United States, who point out that the North has yet to take any tangible steps to give up its nuclear arsenal.

The idea of a peace treaty is not new. The United States and North Korea discussed it in the 1990s and again in 2005. But it has never gone anywhere, largely because North Korea has reneged on pledges to give up its nuclear program.

Most scholars and officials agree that North and South Korea cannot themselves announce an end to the Korean War. It has to involve the United States and China as well, since both were signers to the armistice.

In welcoming Mr. Abe to his estate, Mar-a-Lago, for two days of meetings, Mr. Trump clearly hoped to change the subject from tampered documents, confiscated legal files and other symbols of the political storm clouds that hover over both leaders back home.

After days of ominous reports about his personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, and unflattering descriptions in a new book by James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he ousted, Mr. Trump appeared to savor the prospect of discussing trade and the nuclear threat from North Korea with Mr. Abe, whom he described in Twitter as a “truly fine gentleman.”

The stakes are even higher for Mr. Abe, whose political survival is in doubt after two domestic scandals have sapped his approval ratings and raised questions about whether he will be forced to resign.

Mr. Abe has invested heavily in his relationship with Mr. Trump, whom he first visited at Trump Tower even before he was sworn in. Preserving that relationship, in the face of fresh challenges in trade and from North Korea, could affect Mr. Abe’s standing in Japan.

The White House sought to put a good face on the meeting, describing Japan as a great ally of the United States and Mr. Abe as a friend of Mr. Trump. But officials acknowledged there would be differences over trade, with Mr. Trump pushing

for a trade deal between the two countries and Mr. Abe stung by Mr. Trump's decision not to exempt Japan, like other American allies, from sweeping tariffs on steel exports.

"We have certain disagreements with respect to some of the trading issues," Larry Kudlow, Mr. Trump's chief economic adviser, told reporters before the meeting. "We'll iron those out, hopefully."

Mr. Kudlow said he expected Mr. Abe to petition Mr. Trump to grant Japan an exemption, but declined to predict how he would respond. He also tamped down expectations about the United States rejoining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade pact, now anchored by Japan, which Mr. Trump pulled out of during his first week in office.

"We are in the pre-preliminary stages of any discussions," he said. "It's more of a thought than a policy."

Having met six times — including once before at Mar-a-Lago — and spoken by phone 20 times, Mr. Trump and Mr. Abe were likely to talk about the issues dogging them at home, officials said. But American officials said they did not believe that would dominate their discussions.

"It's all part and parcel of the relationship," said Matthew Pottinger, the senior director for Asia at the National Security Council. "Sometimes they talk about the respective politics in each other's countries. They enjoy talking about it."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/barbara-bush-dies-at-age-92-1524008885>

Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

By Gerald Seib, 4/17/18

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family.

Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment.

With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

Instead, the nation came to know her as the widely admired and humorous matron of a large and expanding extended family, which gathered regularly at its compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, for seemingly endless rounds of boating, fishing and golf.

She also proved more combative and less forgiving than her husband in challenging political foes or perceived press slights, and appeared more embittered by his loss in a re-election bid in 1992. When meeting her successor as first lady, Hillary Clinton, she pointed to the reporters watching them and declared: "Avoid this crowd like the plague. And if they quote you, make damn sure they heard you."

Barbara Bush, Former First Lady, Dies at Age 92

Former first lady Barbara Bush has died at the age of 92. She was the wife of 41st president George H.W. Bush, mother of 43rd president, George W. Bush, and 2016 candidate Jeb Bush. During and after her time in the White House she championed the cause of improving literacy rates among Americans. Photo: Reuters

After the Bushes left the White House, one of their children, George W. Bush, became governor of Texas and another,

Jeb, became governor of Florida. She strongly supported both, as she did the candidacy of George W. Bush when he was elected president in 2000.

Ahead of Jeb Bush mounting his own, ultimately unsuccessful campaign for the presidency, Mrs. Bush didn't sound enthusiastic about seeing her family through political wars, famously declaring that "we've had enough Bushes" in the White House. Once he entered the 2016 race, however, she became a visible supporter.

Barbara Bush was born Barbara Pierce in 1925 and grew up in the suburban town of Rye, N.Y. Her father, Marvin, was a successful business executive who became president of McCall Corp.

She was attending a boarding school in South Carolina when, during a visit back home over Christmas break, she met her future husband, then a senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., at a dance. She was 16 years old. They became engaged a year and a half later.

World War II intervened to delay the wedding, however. Her fiancé went off to the Pacific as a U.S. Navy torpedo-bomber pilot, where he was shot down and rescued.

When he returned on leave, Barbara Pierce dropped out of Smith College, and they were married in 1945. Later, she recalled: "I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell my children that they just about throw up."

After her husband graduated from Yale, the two moved to Texas, where he launched into the oil business and she managed a growing family. Tragedy struck when their daughter Robin, not yet four, died of leukemia. The loss led to a lifelong Bush family devotion to the cause of cancer research.

Her husband veered into politics and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, beginning a steady climb up the political ladder. He went on to become ambassador to the United Nations, envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice president and then president.

Throughout, Mrs. Bush was the crucial, supportive spouse. By her count, she managed some 30 moves by the Bush family.

After the biggest of those moves, into the White House, she said the nation came to see her as "everybody's grandma," and she enjoyed a burst of popularity. In a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll taken in early 1992, 70% of Americans said they had a positive view of her—25 points higher than those who had positive views of her husband.

When Mr. Bush was voted out of office, the couple retreated to their longtime home in Houston, while continuing their annual summer trips to Kennebunkport. She remained active in the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

She largely sought to stay out of the national political debate, though she emerged in 2016 to appear with her son Jeb in a joint interview with CBS News designed to promote his campaign.

In that, she offered him this typically pointed critique of his debate performances: "He's almost too polite...If I gave him advice I would say 'Why don't you interrupt like the other people do?'" Then, without naming Donald Trump, she got in a dig at the man who ultimately prevailed in that campaign by comparing her son favorably to him: "He does not brag like some people we know."

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/bfb5ad674cec4f90b75b5f790d30eb89/As-GOP-balks,-McConnell-shuts-down-bill-to-protect-Mueller>

As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 4/18/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller.

"We'll not be having this on the floor of the Senate," McConnell said on Fox News.

His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it's simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to "poking the bear."

The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer's office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is "an attack on our country" and is "corrupt."

Trump has also privately pondered firing Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is overseeing Mueller's investigation.

Within a day of Trump's criticism, Republicans Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina combined two bills they introduced last summer to protect special counsels. They introduced the new bill along with Democratic Sens. Chris Coons of Delaware and Cory Booker of New Jersey, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, announced that his committee would vote on the bill.

The legislation would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing, and would put into law existing Justice Department regulations that require a firing to be for "good cause."

Democrats immediately jumped on the legislation, but many Republicans have been cool to it.

At least three of the 11 GOP members of the Judiciary panel have said they will vote against it and another five have said they have questions about its constitutionality. Grassley is one of those with concerns, but said he felt obligated to hold a vote.

Republicans off the committee had questions too — and some acknowledged that it could be politically difficult.

South Dakota Sen. Mike Rounds said Tuesday that Trump should make the decision on his own and be responsible for the consequences.

"I think having Congress tell him what we believe he should do in this case is simply poking the bear, and I'd just prefer not to do that," Rounds said.

Oklahoma Sen. Jim Lankford said the bill is a "political distraction."

"You create this whole constitutional political stir over something that is not going to happen," he said.

Others said there was little point.

"It's about as popular as cholera with the leader in the Senate and it's about as popular as malaria in the House," said

Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a member of the Judiciary panel. “I think most people think we’re picking an unnecessary fight with the president.”

Coons bristled at the criticism that the legislation is unconstitutional, noting that several courts have upheld similar special counsel statutes.

“If I were convinced this were unconstitutional, I would not be moving it,” said Coons, a lawyer.

At a September hearing on the two separate bills, before they were combined, scholars were divided on whether the bills were constitutional, with some voicing concerns that allowing the judicial branch that authority over an executive decision may not pass muster in the courts.

“I think it’s probably unconstitutional and I don’t think there’s any realistic chance that the president will fire Mr. Mueller,” Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate and the former Texas attorney general, said Tuesday.

McConnell agreed, adding that Trump would never support the legislation.

“Just as a practical matter, even if we pass it, why would he sign it?” McConnell said in the Fox interview.

Republicans who have talked to the White House almost uniformly have held the line that Trump will not fire Mueller or Rosenstein — including Tillis and Graham, who say they are pushing the legislation because it would be good policy under any president.

“I don’t think he’s going to fire Mueller, but I think institutionally it would be nice to have some protections,” Graham said Tuesday.

Tillis acknowledged last week that he had taken some “heat” from conservatives for the bill, but told the Judiciary panel, “this is really an opportunity to take an ethical stand, and not do it when the situation benefits you.”

Democrats said Republicans opposed to the legislation were simply protecting Trump.

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said the argument over constitutionality is a “red herring used by some of my colleagues as a pretext for opposing the bill, when they really have other reasons.” He gave no specifics.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said the special counsel bill is “so much more” than another policy debate.

“I think this will be one that history will judge us all,” Warner said.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!

15K 6.6K 26K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!

5.4K 12K 41K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

A sketch years later about a nonexistent man. A total con job, playing the Fake News Media for Fools (but they know it)!



Deplorably Scottish @ShennaFoxMusic

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

Oops! This is awkward!
@StormyDaniels's Ex 🤔
#IDTheThug

11K 7.7K 25K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

There is a Revolution going on in California. Soooo many Sanctuary areas want OUT of this ridiculous, crime infested & breeding concept. Jerry Brown is trying to back out of the National Guard at the Border, but the people of the State are not happy. Want Security & Safety NOW!

8.2K 11K 44K



To: [REDACTED]
From: Joe Pounder, President, America Rising Corp.
Date: May 22, 2017
Subject: Media Monitoring Services In 2017-2018

Project Scope:

Provide comprehensive media monitoring of news about Administrator Scott Pruitt and specifically about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Media Monitoring:

Definers Public Affairs can provide comprehensive war room-style media monitoring focused on stories about Administrator Pruitt and the Environmental Protection Agency. This monitoring would include print and online sources, national and local TV, and social media. Stories would be compiled into a **daily matrix** about Administrator Pruitt (example below). While not alerting stories throughout the day with a campaign-level intensity, Definers **will alert major stories as they develop**. Examples of a **Print Alert** and **TV Alert** are below.

The monitoring will focus on stories about Administrator Pruitt and the EPA and not stories about environmental policy in general. The ultimate goal of the monitoring is to provide your team with a greater understanding of the Administrator's and Agency's coverage throughout the day.

In the next three months, Definers will be rolling out for its monitoring clients a new Console that will make all news clips alerted available via login in addition to email notifications. The Console has a powerful search function that will allow users to easily find the clips they need for ongoing projects.

Timeline:

Definers can begin providing immediate support upon execution of an agreement.

Budget:

To accomplish this level of monitoring support, Definers proposes a retainer of **\$10,000 per month** for a term of one-year.

Sample Matrix/Compendium

EPA Clips

May 22, 2017

Print

Brian Dabbs, "EPA Experts Increasingly Shut Out Of Public Statements, Some Complain", Bloomberg, 5/22/17

Joe Wertz, "With Pruitt Leading EPA, Oklahoma Oil Firm Gains Ground In Fight Against Regulation", Stateimpact OK, 5/22/17

Staff, "EPA Workers Plan Rally To Protest Proposed Budget Cuts", Associated Press, 5/21/17

Rafi Letzter And Madeleine Sheehan Perkins, "Scott Pruitt's First 100 Days At The EPA Have Shown He's Unlike Any Former Chief", Business Insider, 5/21/17

Tom Mclaughlin, "EPA Announces Funding Available For Panhandle Estuary Program", Northwest Florida Daily News, 5/21/17

Lauren Cross, "Judge Denies Superfund Residents Court Intervention In EPA Cleanup", NWI Times Indiana, 5/21/17

Staff, "Polluters Are Expecting Big Savings From Scott Pruitt's EPA", Daily Kos, 5/21/17

Miranda Green And Rene Marsh, "President's Fiscal 2018 Budget Would Slash EPA Spending By 30%", CNN, 5/20/17

Hiroko Tbuchu And Eric Lipton, "How Rollbacks At Scott Pruitt's E.P.A. Are A Boon To Oil And Gas", New York Times, 5/20/17

Rick Keigwin, "EPA Collaborates With Growers On Risks", Iowa Farmer Today, 5/20/17

Adam Wernick, "EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Is Not Making Anyone Happy Right Now", PRI, 5/20/17

Timothy Gardner, "White House Moving Ahead With Stiff EPA Budget Cuts: Group, Citing Document", Reuters, 5/19/17

Brady Dennis, "EPA To Set Aside \$12 Million For Buyouts In Coming Months", Washington Post,

5/19/17

Jennifer Ludden, "Public To EPA On Cutting Regulations: 'No!'", [NPR](#), 5/19/17

Jason O. Boyd, "Congressman Jones Calls For Removal Of EPA Regulation Impacting Aurora Mine", [WCTI Washington](#), 5/19/17

Caitlyn Stuplin, "EPA Preparing Cleanup Plan For West Deptford Superfund Site", [NJ Advance Media](#), 5/19/17

Staff, "EPA Partners With Quapaw Tribe Of Oklahoma To Continue Cleanup At Tar Creek Superfund Site; Epa Awards Over \$4 Million To Tribe", [Galena Sentinel Times](#), 5/19/17

Chris White, "EPA Official Invites Left-Wing Environmental Group To Agency For Talk On Science", [Daily Signal](#), 5/19/17

Marianne Lavelle And Georgina Gustin, "Trump Budget Would Wallop EPA's Climate And Environment Programs", [Inside Climate News](#), 5/20/17

Emily Atlin, "Scott Pruitt Is The Hypocritical Liar That Trump Deserves", [New Republic](#), 5/19/17

Andrew Freedman, "EPA Leader To Get More Bodyguards While Cutting Other Agency Staff", [Mashable](#), 5/19/17

Staff, "EPA Chairman Scott Pruitt On Potential Ramifications Of Pulling Out Of The Paris Climate Agreement: We Are The United States, We Don't Lose Our Seat At The Table", [Fox News Radio](#), 5/19/17

TV/Radio

5/22/17 [NPR](#): Discussion On The EPA Decision To Reverse The Chlorpyrifos Ban

Social

[@EmilyAtkin](#): "Scott Pruitt is touring conservative media outlets claiming Obama's EPA didn't accomplish anything. This is...false"

[@Bruneski](#): "Don't agonize, organize! How Rollbacks at Scott Pruitt's E.P.A. Are a Boon to Oil and Gas [nyti.ms/2qF7RrK](#)"

[@RepHankJohnson](#): "The budget's [#TrumpCuts](#) at EPA will negatively impact: -the AIR we breathe -the WATER we drink -the CLIMATE we leave our kids"

[@RepStefanik](#): "Sent a letter to the EPA expressing my concerns over the dismissal of members of

the Board of Scientific Counselors... It's critical that the EPA continues to use the highest quality research when making policy decisions."

@Heritage: "Conservatives should be excited about the new @EPA agenda. bit.ly/2qKfqyb"

@AGRutledge: "I have a duty on behalf of Arkansans to provide a list of regulations to the EPA that should be rolled back. [#arpx](https://www.arkansasag.gov/media-center/n...) | [arkansasag.gov/media-center/n...](https://www.arkansasag.gov/media-center/n...)"

@AGRutledge: "The EPA has a unique opportunity to evaluate its regulatory programs and identify what is working and not working. [arkansasag.gov/media-center/n...](https://www.arkansasag.gov/media-center/n...)"

Sample Print Alert:

Exclusive: Trump EPA Transition Chief Laments Slow Progress In Killing Green Rules

Reuters

By Valerie Volcovici

May 22, 2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-ebell-exclusive-idUSKBN18I196>

The man who led President Donald Trump's transition team for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Myron Ebell, told a conservative conference last month that the new administration is moving too slowly to unravel climate change regulations.

In closed-door remarks to members of the conservative Jefferson Institute in Virginia on April 18, a recording of which was obtained by Reuters, Ebell said Trump's administration had made a series of missteps, including delays in appointing key EPA officials, that could hamper efforts to cut red tape for industry.

"This is an impending disaster for the Trump administration," Ebell, a prominent climate change doubter, said in the recording provided to the Center for Media and Democracy and shared with Reuters.

Ebell was chosen by Trump's campaign to lead the EPA's transition until the Jan. 20 inauguration, a choice that had reinforced expectations Trump would follow through on promises to rescind Obama-era green rules and pull the United States out of a global pact to fight climate change.

Ebell had been seen as a candidate for the EPA administrator job, a post that ultimately went to former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt.

Ebell no longer works at the agency but remains influential within a faction of the U.S. conservative movement with ties to the Trump administration. His criticism reflects a broader disappointment by some conservatives about Pruitt's focus and commitment to scrapping even more complex Obama-era regulations.

Since taking office, Trump and Pruitt have moved to unwind environmental regulations, including former President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon emissions from electricity generators.

But his administration has frustrated some conservatives by entertaining the idea of remaining in the Paris Climate Agreement, and hesitating to tackle the Obama-era "endangerment finding" that concludes carbon dioxide is a public health threat and underlies many U.S. regulations governing emissions. Lawyers have said challenging that scientific finding could be time consuming and legally complex.

Pruitt has said he does not want the United States to remain in the Paris agreement but he has not yet decided to tackle the endangerment finding. At least three conservative groups have filed petitions asking the EPA to overturn the finding.

"Paris and the endangerment finding are the two big outstanding issues. It's the first wave of things that are necessary to turn this country around, particularly in the heartland states," Ebell said at the conference.

Ebell cited the slow pace of key EPA appointments, including deputy administrator and various assistant administrators, a lack of experienced personnel at the White House, deep ideological divisions between the president's close advisers, and an "imperfect choice" of EPA administrator, as the main reasons Trump was not acting more aggressively on climate rules.

He said Trump strategists should have allowed his transition team to roll out the full de-regulatory agenda before Trump took office, instead of delaying. "The new president doesn't have long before inertia sets in," he said.

He also found fault in Trump's choice of Pruitt to run the EPA, saying the former state attorney is a "clever lawyer" but his "political ambition" may distract him from taking-on time-consuming efforts like challenging the endangerment finding.

A spokesman for Pruitt responded to Ebell's assertions, saying Pruitt had been implementing Trump's executive orders and had spearheaded "about two dozen regulatory reform actions" since taking up his position.

Ebell also faulted Trump for choosing advisers with broadly different political perspectives and backgrounds - something he said was triggering paralyzing debate, instead of action.

"He's got people on different sides and they are all fighting over who gets these jobs and nobody has the clout except the president to say, 'Hey fix this, let's get this done,'" Ebell said.

In a statement given to Reuters on Saturday, Ebell said he is still concerned about the White House log-jam in nominating people for key EPA posts and the delay in making the Paris decision.

But he said he supports Pruitt as an administrator and is encouraged by his recent actions.

"Pruitt was an excellent choice to head the EPA, and minor disagreements aside, his recent actions have made me even more confident that he will be an outstanding administrator," he said.

A White House official did not respond to a request for comment.

Sample TV Alert

Administrator Pruitt Discusses Plans And Leadership For The Environmental Protection Agency

Fox & Friends

May 17, 2017

<http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?StationID=130&DateTime=5/17/2017%206:47:40%20AM&playclip=true>

Steve: Good morning to you.

Administrator Pruitt: Good morning. Good to be back with you.

Steve: the press made President Obama out to be the environmental savior. And yet, when you look at the number of toxic dumps left on your plate, it's a big number.

Administrator Pruitt: Absolutely. in fact, Ainsley, you said these fights across the country have some of the uranium and lead, posing great risk to the citizens in those areas. And examples where the E.P.A. didn't take any steps at all. We have a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the E.P.A. 27 years just to make a decision. Not clean it up, but to make a decision on what should be done to clean it up.

Steve: That crosses both Democrat and Republican administrations.

Administrator Pruitt: Absolutely, and I think when you look at the environmental left they look at the past administration as an environmental savior. When you look at areas of contaminant in this country that don't meet the air quality standards, almost 40% of the country that qualify there. 120 million people. We had Gold King in Colorado. Flint in Michigan with water. The super fund sites across the country. the area that they focused on, the CO2 reductions they struck out twice on as far as regulations. The supreme court struck them down twice.

Ainsley: What does this mean for the folks that are watching this? Does this mean can you get cancer if you are exposed to all of this?

Administrator Pruitt: Possibly, yes. And that's why it's so important to focus the core of the mission on those areas. This president is a doer, an action oriented leader. the past administration talked a lot. this administration is actually taking steps to do things to clean up the environment. We're focusing on those areas you mentioned.

Brian: super fund sites that need to be cleaned up. What's your first target?

Administrator Pruitt: We are very focused on Westlake. I was in East Chicago about three weeks ago. a site that has lead as well.

Brian: do you know how to do it?

Administrator Pruitt: We have a plan in place that we're going to announce very soon on Westlake. So it's very important to make those citizens know we are going to take steps to clean up and clean it up quickly.

Ainsley: Mr. Pruitt, we are talking about memos and what's happening in the white house. this is what the American public really needs to be focused on

Steve: our personal safety.

Ainsley: protecting our kids from cancer.

Administrator Pruitt: They want leadership. and this president is providing leadership it in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C. malaise in all these areas.

Steve: provide leadership to do what with the environment."

Administrator Pruitt: Clean up these sites. set a goal and say 1322 sites unacceptable. 27 years to make a decision is unacceptable. Let's get St. Louis cleaned up.

Steve: how much is it going to cost?

Administrator Pruitt: The great thing about this is we have private funding. There are people out there responsible for these sites to clean up. There is money out there to do so. it's not a matter of money. it's a matter of leadership and attitude and management. we need to do it much better.

brian: when are you going to make a decision on leaving and staying in paril, the paris agreement.

Administrator Pruitt: I think when the president gets back from the G7. I'm actually attending the G7 in early June as well and there will be a decision on Paris. Very important we make decisions there soon.

Brian: it will be one of the big top topics.

Brian: Great to see you.

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Hassell, Emily
Sent: Wed 1/24/2018 7:19:27 PM
Subject: White House Report: Daily Wrap and Top Stories, 24 January 2018

Daily Wrap

ABC News (Julia Macfarlane) - Antarctic Treaty System.

AP (Michael Biesecker) - Michael Dourson's departure.

BNA (David Schultz) - Leaked White House infrastructure proposal.

Boston Globe (David Abel); CNN (Sophie Tatum) - Lawsuit on removal of scientists from advisory boards.

Boston Globe (Matt Rocheleau) - Dry ice for rodent control.

CQ Roll Call (Jackie Toth) - Public access to TSCA documents.

Duo Creative Communications, Inc. (Shoko Ando) - Update on artificial turf research).

Engineering News Record (Ethan Howland) - Changes to Superfund under Trump Administration.

Ensia Magazine (Lynne Peebles) - Former superfund sites.

InsideEPA (Suzanne Yohannan) - AA for OLEM nomination.

Motherboard (Rebecca Flowers) - Plastics and coral reefs.

News 5 WCYB (Josh Engel) - Southeast Recycling profile.

PBS News Hour (Will Toubman) - Dangers of asbestos.

Project on Government Oversight (Nick Schwellenbach) - Definers contract.

Reuters (Dena Aubin) - Menominee Tribe vs. EPA.

Shale Daily (Charlie Passut) - Comment on WOTUS case.

Tampa Bay Times (Craig Pittman) - Florida 404 program permitting.

Vox (Umair Irfan) - EPA transformation under Administrator Pruitt.

Washington Times (Laura Kelly) - Nuclear emergency preparedness.

Your \$ (Hayden Field) - Why buy used?

Top Stories

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/01/epw-schedules-pruitt-testimony-for-jan-30-454719>

EPW schedules Pruitt testimony for Jan. 30

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2018/01/23/stories/1060071721>

Pruitt picks acting homeland security, science board chiefs

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060071701/search?keyword=EPA>

Pruitt adviser Michael Dourson heads for the exit

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060071711/search?keyword=EPA>

Protesters deemed threat to Pruitt, triggered probe

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060071757/search?keyword=EPA>

Senate Dems strategize ahead of Pruitt hearing

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060071787/search?keyword=EPA>

Dems — eyeing gavels — want to see Pruitt a lot more

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/california-trump-officials-weigh-emissions-rule-changes-1516816107?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=1>

California, Trump Officials Weigh Vehicle-Emissions Rule Changes

<https://apnews.com/60f24f3803cc4253ab3bd5bd4ab86705/Carson-City-mayor-to-meet-with-President-Trump-at-US-capital>

Carson City mayor to meet with President Trump at US capital

<https://www.eenews.net/energywire/stories/1060071781/search?keyword=EPA>

Trump nominates Clean Power Plan foe to federal court

http://esweb.bna.com/eslw/display/no_alpha.adp?mode=si&frag_id=127298058&item=408&prod=deln&cat=A

Trump Team May Not Have Time to Delay Water Rule

<http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/370334-epas-budget-has-been-devastated-for-decades-heres-the-math>

EPA's budget has been devastated for decades: Here's the math

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060071707/search?keyword=EPA>

Leaked Trump plan hints at action on mine cleanups

<https://apnews.com/7efaa90af83a44d4bc0c7d0121f92c0c/Trump-pick-who-failed-to-win-Senate-support-is-leaving-EPA>

Trump pick who failed to win Senate support is leaving EPA

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/environmental-groups-sue-epa-for-policy-banning-agency-funded-scientists-from-advising-him/article/2646867>

Environmental groups sue EPA for policy banning agency-funded scientists from advising him

http://www.thewesternnews.com/local_news/20180123/libbys_superfund_sites_among_sites_on_epas_redevelo

LIBBY'S SUPERFUND SITES AMONG SITES ON EPA'S REDEVELOPMENT FOCUS LIST

http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/news/state/albany-awarded-million-loan-for-sewer-improvements/article_27f389f9-1477-53b4-a2f3-88aad44ba116.html

Albany awarded \$15 million loan for sewer improvements

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-energy-transf-ohio/ohio-again-asks-ferc-to-block-drilling-for-rover-natgas-pipeline-project-idUSKBN1FD2GE>

Ohio again asks FERC to block drilling for Rover natgas pipeline project

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 2/5/2018 10:45:20 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Not just Democrats blocking Trump nominees — CEQ nominee withdrawn — More trouble in the nuclear family

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 02/05/2018 05:43 AM EDT

With help from Darius Dixon, Eric Wolff and Alex Guillén

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A HOLD ON ME: It's not just Democrats who are obstructing President Donald Trump's nominees across key positions in federal agencies — GOP lawmakers are standing in the way, too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports.

Republicans have been quick to blame Democrats for keeping the Trump administration from filling key federal positions, but the GOP holds have become common as senators turn to them for leverage to extract policy concessions from federal agencies. And it's notables since senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog, and the hold-ups are causing intraparty frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recently, Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) announced he put a hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market. And he's not the only one: Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee as he pushes for changes to the biofuel program, while Sen. [Dean Heller](#), an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) called the holds "silly" and said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off." Read the story [here](#).

WELCOME TO MONDAY! Congrats to the Philadelphia Eagles! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and RFA's Rachel Gantz was first to know New Orleans and Miami are tied for hosting the most Super Bowls, with 10 each. Miami, however, will hold the record once it hosts again in 2020. For today: Who was the first House member to represent two states? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HARTNETT WHITE OUT: Kathleen Hartnett White is out as nominee to lead the White House's Council on Environmental Quality, ME has confirmed. A controversial nominee, Hartnett White had faced considerable backlash for her previous comments on carbon dioxide, climate science and anti-pollution regulations, not to mention her crediting fossil fuels for helping to end slavery. Her nomination had been stalled for months, even as other energy picks moved forward.

"I respectfully withdraw my name from further consideration to be confirmed as Chairman

of the White House Council on Environmental Quality effective immediately. I want to thank President Trump for his confidence in me and I will continue to champion his policies and leadership on environmental and energy issues of critical importance to making our nation great, prosperous and secure again," Hartnett White said in a statement. "... In the best interest of facilitating confirmation of the President's nominees throughout his administration, as well the needs of my family and work, I feel it is best, at this point in time, to withdraw my name from further consideration."

The White House still had faith in Hartnett White last month, when it renominated her after her nomination had stagnated the previous year. Hartnett White had been a target of greens since her name was first brought up in late 2016. During an appearance before the Senate EPW Committee after being nominated, Hartnett White touted carbon dioxide as "necessary for life on Earth" and drew initial concern from several corn-state Republicans about calls to repeal the Renewable Fuel Standard, but then walked that back to align herself with the White House's stance.

IN THE CLEAR: The news also helps clear the way for two EPA nominations to move forward: Andrew Wheeler — whose past lobbying clients include coal producer Murray Energy — to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Last week, Tom Carper, the ranking Democrat on EPW and fierce critic of Hartnett White, told EPA's Scott Pruitt he'd work to block the EPA nominees until Trump withdrew the Hartnett White nomination. "I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters. On Saturday, Carper touted the news. "It was abundantly clear that leading the White House Council on Environmental Quality wasn't the right job for Kathleen Hartnett White," he tweeted. "I often say when you think you're right, when you know you're right, you must never give up. That's what we did here." The EPW Committee announced it will hold a business meeting on Wheeler's nomination on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

NEI'S MESSY DIVORCE GOES TO COURT: NextEra Energy made a splash last month when it dropped its membership with the Nuclear Energy Institute. But now the company is suing the D.C. trade group over alleged economic retaliation. In a lawsuit filed Friday, NextEra says that NEI has refused to let them retain access to an industry-wide nuclear personnel database called PADS through March unless the company forks over \$860,000, most which NextEra says are fees related to NEI membership. "NextEra promptly notified NEI that it would not accede to this extortionate and coercive demand," the complaint, filed in the District Court for the Southern District of Florida, West Palm Beach, states. NextEra says that they paid about \$3 million a year in NEI membership fees. The timing is also calculated to inflict pain, according to NextEra, because its St. Lucie nuclear plant is scheduled to begin a refueling operation — a process that relies heavily on PADS for vetting work, and psychological and criminal histories of hundreds of workers brought on-site — this coming Wednesday.

NextEra says it left NEI because the group was backing "bad energy policy" that was out of step with its business and would "unnecessarily harm consumers." NEI's support of Energy Secretary Rick Perry's ill-fated grid resilience proposal was particularly problematic for NextEra, as were the group's support of nuclear at the expense of other forms of generation. "NEI will use

that membership fee, in part, to advocate for policies that are directly at odds with the NextEra Companies' interests and bad for the electricity industry as a whole," the company states. In our [previous reporting](#) on NEI's drama, we noted that board chairman Don Brandt described NextEra CEO Jim Robo as being "more hardened on his decision" to leave the D.C. trade association than Entergy chief Leo Denault after other utility CEO attempted to dissuade them.

NEI responded saying the claims of the lawsuit was without merit, and said for NextEra to call NEI's approach "retaliatory, or even suggest the notion of extortion, is both counter-factual and offensive to the good faith effort the offer represents." NEI said it reached out to the company in good faith to open a dialogue to help keep the industry "as unified as possible, on regulatory and other policy positions. Unfortunately, rather than even opening a dialogue NextEra immediately followed its rejection of NEI's offer with a baseless lawsuit."

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: A New Jersey-based home improvement contractor who is married to a former household staffer of Donald and Melania Trump is now working as an EPA official, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia reports. Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization." Andrew reports via public records that Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, N.J., called Steve's Tools in Motion. His wife Dagmara previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation. Read it [here](#).

RYDER NOMINATED FOR TVA: The president will nominate Memphis attorney John Ryder to the last open seat on the board of directors for the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Times Free Press [reports](#) Ryder, who will need to be confirmed by the Senate, has "served as general counsel at the Republican National Committee for the past five years and is a long-time GOP activist." Tennessee Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#), a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he was glad to see the news. Ryder "understands that TVA's mission is to continue to provide cheap, clean, reliable electricity for homes and businesses throughout the seven-state Tennessee Valley region," he said.

U.S. CONSIDERING VENEZUELAN OIL RESTRICTIONS: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday the U.S. is considering restricting Venezuelan crude oil imports and exports of U.S. refined products to Venezuela, in order to apply pressure on President Nicolas Maduro to "return to the constitution," Reuters reports. "One of the aspects of considering sanctioning oil is what effect would it have on the Venezuelan people? Is it a step that might bring this to an end more rapidly?" Tillerson said at a news conference, referring to Venezuela's economic and political crisis. More [here](#).

A FRIENDLY WAGER: With the Eagles' Super Bowl win in the books, FERC Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur owes Robert Powelson some lobsters. Powelson [tweeted](#) on Friday that the pair should up their Super Bowl wager, which originally had the loser wear the winning team's jersey to their February open meeting. LaFleur [tweeted](#) she'd bet two Maine lobsters, to which Powelson [said](#) he'd offer up "(2) Kobe beef cheesesteaks and add a case of Victory IPA to wash

them down." LaFleur agreed to those new terms, adding she would add beverages as well, likely Sam Adams. After the game, Powelson tweeted an invite to Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, after he tweeted his own support for the Patriots. "Commish, please join me in Philly for the parade. Love to host you! Fly Eagles Fly!" he said.

GOT KIGALI ON MY MIND: The Trump administration last year announced rare support for an international agreement that would reduce a greenhouse gas, but it still has a heavy lift ahead. The Hudson Institute will go over the details of the status of the amendment, including discussion of getting two-thirds of the Senate to approve it (and when the administration should submit it), and possibly also how the federal government will implement the treaty if approved. The D.C. Circuit rejected EPA's use of the Clean Air Act to implement reductions of hydrofluorocarbons, leaving supporters considering the Toxic Substances Control Act as an alternative. **If you go:** Hudson Institute, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, at 9 a.m.

EXXON'S CLIMATE BOTTOM LINE: Exxon Mobil released its 2-degree scenario report late Friday, finding that even under aggressive climate policies there would be "little risk" to its investments. The report has been sought by shareholders who have been asking what the effect of policies — like the Paris climate agreement — might have on the company's bottom line. "Based on currently anticipated production schedules, we estimate that by 2040, over 90 percent of our year-end 2016 proved reserves will have been produced," the Friday report said. "Considering that the 2°C Scenarios Average implies significant use of oil and natural gas through the middle of the century, we believe these reserves face little risk." Read the report here.

BREAKING DOWN THE FUEL MIX: Data from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association show "electric cooperatives' retail fuel mix nationwide is trending toward natural gas and renewable energy resources and away from coal-based generation." In a news post explaining the trend, NRECA writes that the share of co-op electricity from coal was 41 percent in 2016. That's compared with 54 percent in 2014, according to NRECA's research. According to the recently released research from Lauren Khair, NRECA regional economic analyst, and Michael Leitman, NRECA strategic analyst, "as coal use decreased, natural gas rose from 18 percent in 2014 to 26 percent in 2016" and the "share of renewable energy resources (non-hydro) doubled from 4 percent to 8 percent for the same period." Read more.

CALIFORNIA SCHEMIN': California is readying itself to fight back if the Trump administration tries to stop it from its tough focus on emissions, Bloomberg's Mark Chediak, Dana Hull and John Lippert report. During a Bloomberg New Energy Finance event Friday, Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said she thought "there would be a war with many states lining up with California" if the state's rule-setting waiver is revoked. More here.

— **The Energy Information Administration broke down** California's plans on Friday to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030. More here.

HEADS UP: The House will consider a few bills today under suspension of the rules, including: H.R. 2371 (115), the Western Area Power Administration Transparency Act; H.R. 2888 (115),

the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act; [S. 1438 \(115\)](#), the Gateway Arch National Park Designation Act and [H.R. 219 \(115\)](#), the Swan Lake Hydroelectric Project Boundary Correction Act.

BILL SPOTLIGHT: Sens. [John Boozman](#), [Jim Inhofe](#), [Cory Booker](#) and [Dianne Feinstein](#) [introduced](#) bipartisan legislation Friday to modernize investment in water infrastructure and amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014. The "Securing Required Funding for Water Infrastructure Now (SRF WIN) Act," [S. 2364 \(115\)](#), in part would authorize \$200 million annually over five years to support state revolving fund projects exclusively, and would allow thousands of vetted drinking water and wastewater projects to receive funding, effectively eliminating the need for EPA to process the loan applications.

TELECOM GOES GREEN: Following news from T-Mobile that it set a goal to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for powering its networks by 2021, AT&T has hinted it will do the same. The company [tweeted](#) last week that it "just signed a couple of the industry's largest renewable energy deals," with more details to come. Todd Larsen, executive co-director of consumer and corporate engagement at Green America, which has called on AT&T to move to 100 percent renewables, said they welcome the news. "We are pleased that AT&T is listening to the thousands of consumers who have encouraged the company to pursue clean energy and to join the other 123 [RE100](#) companies who have made the '100 percent renewable' pledge," Larson said.

MAIL CALL: Maine Sens. [Susan Collins](#) and [Angus King](#) urged leaders on the Finance committee to include language from the Biomass Thermal Utilization Act — which would qualify biomass heating equipment for renewable energy tax credits — in any tax extender legislation. Read the letter [here](#).

QUICK HITS

- Perry certain SRS has 'very bright' future ahead of it, [Aiken Standard](#).
- High-ranking Trump official attends hunting convention, [The Hill](#).
- Trump official discusses offshore drilling with governor, legislators in separate meetings, [The News & Observer](#).
- OSHA standards moot in Quinton rig explosion because of exemption for oil-and-gas industry, [Tulsa World](#).
- Document reveals ambitious reorganization timeline, [E&E News](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

MONDAY

9:00 a.m. — The Hudson Institute [forum](#) on hydrofluorocarbons and the Kigali treaty, 1201

Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — Johns Hopkins University hosts EIA Administrator Linda Capuano to present the agency's Annual Energy Outlook 2018, 1740 Massachusetts Ave NW

10:00 a.m. — House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee hearing on "DOE Modernization: Advancing the Economic and National Security Benefits of America's Nuclear Infrastructure," 2123 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing on various bills, 366 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee hearing on national monument bills, 1324 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — The National Association of State Energy Officials holds its Energy Policy Outlook Conference, 2401 M St NW

2:00 p.m. — House Natural Resources Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee hearing on tribal land bills, 1324 Longworth

WEDNESDAY

9:30 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee business meeting to consider Andrew Wheeler's nomination to be deputy administrator of EPA, 406 Dirksen.

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee hearing on various bills, 366 Dirksen

12:00 p.m. — The Women's Council on Energy and the Environment hosts a "lunch and learn," 1055 Thomas Jefferson St NW

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on "Energy Infrastructure," 366 Dirksen

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. — The National Capital Chapter of the U.S. Energy Economists hosts its February lunch, 425 7th St NW

12:30 p.m. — Johns Hopkins University discussion of energy policy in India and the role of coal, 1619 Massachusetts Ave NW

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/02/not-just-democrats-blocking-trump-nominees-092892>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

McConnell floats rules change to limit debate on nominations [Back](#)

By Elana Schor | 10/31/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) suggested on Tuesday that he would support a rules change limiting Democrats' ability to delay confirmation of President Donald Trump's nominees.

Although they cannot filibuster Trump's nominees because of previous rules changes, Democrats have tied up the Senate floor with lengthy confirmation debates — from [Cabinet](#) nominees to a series of less-senior names whose approvals were delayed during the tense battle over Obamacare repeal.

McConnell has [committed](#) to maintaining the Senate minority's power to filibuster legislation, but on Tuesday he left the door open to backing further limits on Democratic slowdowns of the confirmation process.

The consideration process for presidential nominees "is a different matter" than the legislative filibuster, McConnell said, lambasting recent Democratic slowdowns as "just simply ridiculous."

McConnell's protest rings hollow for Democrats who keenly recall his obstruction of former President Barack Obama's nominees, including Judge Merrick Garland's failure to get a hearing after Obama nominated him to the Supreme Court.

"Sen. McConnell does not come to the court with clean hands on these issues," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters when asked about the Kentucky Republican's suggestion of a future rules change. "He delayed and blocked so many of Obama's nominees."

Schumer, like many of his fellow Democrats, also noted that Trump already has gotten more judges confirmed to the federal bench than Obama did at the same point in his presidency, despite the GOP's [push for](#) a faster pace of confirmations.

McConnell cited a proposal crafted by Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) that would limit the minority's power to run out the clock after debate has been formally curtailed. Lankford began [floating](#) the idea in April as Democrats forced a procedural showdown over the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch — who occupies the seat Garland had been nominated to fill.

The Senate currently has 30 hours of floor time to discuss a nominee after cloture is invoked to limit debate, and Lankford's plan would limit that to 8 hours.

McConnell said on Tuesday that "there may be a possibility to adjust" the amount of time Democrats have to prolong floor debate on nominees after cloture is invoked "in a way more consistent with the Senate, and the administration getting its positions filled in a timely fashion."

McConnell suggested that Lankford is seeking Democratic buy-in for the rules change, and Lankford said through a spokesman: "Conversations with my colleagues about my proposal have been positive. The American people expect us to get more work done."

But another member of GOP leadership said that bipartisanship shouldn't be a requirement in order to limit the minority's ability to force lengthy confirmation debates.

If Democrats don't scale back their delays, "I think we should do whatever is necessary, either with cooperation or without, to stop that procedure from being used to keep us from the other work we need to do," said Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, No. 5 in Republican leadership. "It's obvious that's what they're doing."

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Friendly fire imperils some of GOP's own nominees [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 02/05/2018 05:03 AM EDT

Blocking President Donald Trump's nominees is a bipartisan affair.

While Republicans have blamed Democratic obstruction for keeping positions at federal agencies from being filled by confirmed officials, some GOP lawmakers are standing in the way too. At least 11 Republican senators have disclosed holds on nominees for agencies including the departments of Energy, Agriculture and State.

It's not an unusual tactic as senators frequently use whatever leverage they have to extract policy concessions from federal agencies, but it's notable especially as senior Republicans have raised [the possibility of changing](#) Senate rules due to the nomination backlog. And the hold ups are causing intra-party frustration for making an already arduous confirmation process even more difficult.

Most recent to slap a hold on a Trump nominee is Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) (R-Wyo.) — who blamed Democrats in November for turning the Senate "into the world's most paralyzed deliberative body" — when he announced his hold on an Energy nominee over the agency's practice of selling excess government-controlled uranium onto the market.

"You were unable to give me a firm commitment to immediately halt these barter, something that [Energy Secretary Rick] Perry has told me he wants to do," Barrasso told Anne White at her Jan. 18 nomination hearing to be assistant secretary for environmental management. "So for this reason, I am unable to support a confirmation at this time and withhold the confirmation until the department ends its practice of bartering excess uranium."

A spokeswoman for Barrasso declined further comment on the hold or how it's different than the tactics used by Democrats that the Wyoming Republican has frequently bashed.

Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) said her fellow Republicans should "knock it off," calling intra-party holds "silly."

Holds lost some power after Senate Democrats in 2013 invoked the so-called nuclear option for most nominees, allowing them to be confirmed by a simple majority, and Republicans expanded that approach to Supreme Court nominees last year.

But because the Senate operates almost entirely based on unanimous consent, a single senator can still threaten to significantly gum up the procedural works if his or her hold is not honored. And with Republicans holding only 51 seats, a GOP senator's objection carries even more weight.

It's hard to make broad conclusions about holds because they can be placed on nominees for any reason and don't always have to be disclosed, although the Senate has taken some steps to add transparency to the process. A resolution passed in 2011 requires senators to make public their holds on nominees or legislation if they submit written objections to party leaders. During the 2011-12 session of Congress, 24 objections were published, but that number fell to nine the following session and rose to 34 in the 2015-16 session, according to the Congressional Research Service.

In 2017, the first half of the current congressional session, eight objections were published, half of which came from Iowa Republican Chuck Grassley, according to a POLITICO review of the Congressional Record.

Those numbers are not comprehensive, CRS warns, noting that senators do not have to publish their plans if they tell leaders in person or over the phone that they would put a hold on a nominee. Several other Republicans announced holds last year that were not included in the Congressional Record.

Ted Cruz is objecting to an Agriculture Department nominee to push for changes to national ethanol policy. Dean Heller, an opponent of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, is blocking a nominee to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Cory Gardner is blocking Justice Department nominees over marijuana policy. Majority Whip John Cornyn blocked the nominee for the number two spot at OMB over Hurricane Harvey relief funding. John McCain placed holds on several Defense nominees over inadequate information on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Tim Scott announced a hold on Trump's trade nominee to draw attention to issues in his

state. Sen. Thom Tillis is standing in the way of a DHS nominee to pressure the agency on immigration. Todd Young stalled a State Department nominee to force action related to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And Rand Paul put his own hold on a DOJ nominee over his past work on NSA surveillance. There may be even more anonymous holds that have not drawn as much attention.

Democrats occasionally engaged in some of the same tactics during the Obama presidency. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), for example, placed separate holds on Obama's FDA nomination in January 2016 over his ties to the drug industry and handling of the opioid epidemic. Markey and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) placed a hold on a Democratic FCC nominee back in November 2016 as well.

This is an "uncommon period" for intra-party holds that suggests some lawmakers feel they aren't being given adequate input into some of the agency selections, according to Joshua Huder, a senior fellow at the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University.

"Holds have definitely lost their partisan edge certainly. They haven't gone away," Huder said.

But, he added, it is "virtually impossible to tell which holds are because they have personal differences with a nominee and when they're holding something up for leverage on something else."

Last fall, delays in confirming EPA picks led Jim Inhofe to place his own hold on a FERC nominee, Democrat Rich Glick, that had the impact of snarling an entire package of carefully negotiated Energy, Interior and FERC nominees. Inhofe eventually lifted his hold in early November, allowing the confirmation of a pair of FERC commissioners.

Cruz slapped a hold on Bill Northey for a senior USDA post last fall after several corn-state Republican peers blocked consideration of several EPA picks in committee as part of an effort to extract concessions on the Renewable Fuel Standard. That prompted Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to describe the delay in confirmation as "pretty crippling, quite frankly." A spokesman for Cruz didn't respond to request for comment on what he would need to lift his hold.

Heller placed his own hold on GOP NRC nominee Annie Caputo last summer. His office declined to comment on the status of the hold, though Caputo remains waiting for Senate action.

Congressional veterans aren't surprised by the tactics that can be used to extract policy concessions or commitments from federal agencies.

"Elected officials will frequently use whatever leverage is available to accomplish political goals they deem to be important," former Kentucky Rep. Ed Whitfield told POLITICO in an email.

Robert Dillon, a former aide for Murkowski, said Republicans are "not monolithic" and senators will push for the interests of their states even when their positions on nominations are "at odds with leadership."

Several senators said the hold process was something for each lawmaker to navigate on their own and supported the right to block nominations, even those that came from their own party.

"Every senator has the reason and prerogative to put holds no matter which party the president comes from," [Steve Daines](#) (R-Mont.) told POLITICO. "I respect — but may not always agree — with where my fellow senators may land on these issues."

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Carper vows to block EPA nominees until White withdraws [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 01/30/2018 01:14 PM EDT

Sen. [Tom Carper](#) (D-Del.) told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today that he will work to block two key EPA nominees until President Donald Trump withdraws his controversial nominee to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"I made it clear that those nominations were going to find it difficult to move forward expeditiously as long as the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White was still out there," Carper told reporters after a brief private conversation with Pruitt following a hearing. White, who has questioned climate science and criticized anti-pollution regulations, would not be directly connected to EPA, but leading CEQ would give her broad influence over environmental policy across the administration.

The EPA nominations in question are Andrew Wheeler to be deputy administrator and Holly Greaves to be chief financial officer. Carper declined to say whether Wheeler's past lobbying work, particularly for coal producer Murray Energy, would threaten his nomination as well.

Carper has criticized White since she appeared before the committee last year and gave what he called "perhaps the worst performance I've seen in 17 years." White has stalled as Democrats seek the two moderate Republican votes needed to quash her nomination.

Pruitt "said he'd think about that and maybe we'd have a chance to talk further down the road," Carper told reporters.

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DOE rule offers nuclear industry much-wanted attention [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 11/21/2017 05:00 AM EDT

The nuclear industry may be a collateral winner in President Donald Trump's effort to end the "war on coal."

Nuclear power plant owners spent much of the past decade at odds with their coal-fired peers over climate change, but now they have found their fates intertwined thanks to the Trump administration's view that protecting the old workhorses of the electric grid is key to maintaining a reliable supply of power.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry's proposal to alter electricity markets would be a boon for coal companies like Murray Energy and the utilities supplied by its mines, but the proposal allows nuclear companies to come along for the ride — welcome relief for an industry that often felt left out of the Obama administration's climate push despite its carbon-free profile.

"It's not surprising to see nuclear energy and coal in there together because they were sort of the odd couple out in the Obama administration. With respect, their focus was on renewables," said David Blee, who heads the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council, a coalition of companies working in the sector. "This administration is making up for lost time in those areas."

The Obama administration disappointed the nuclear industry by not providing much in the way of explicit incentives for existing reactors, despite relying on the carbon-free electricity they provide to hit the Clean Power Plan's emissions reduction target.

But now the Energy Department has drawn nuclear into the new administration's pro-coal fold by basing its grid rule on a characteristic the two technologies share. Perry's proposal calls for consumers to pay power plants operating in regional electricity markets for keeping 90 days of fuel supply onsite. Most coal-fired power plants in the PJM Interconnection could qualify, as would virtually all nuclear plants in those areas because reactors only refuel every 18 to 24 months.

"Maybe in previous administrations there was some support [for nuclear power] but I feel this administration has been much more vocal," Nuclear Energy Institute CEO Maria Korsnick said, noting that one of Perry's first trips as DOE chief was to the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site. "The challenge is how we lever that to make the most of it. This notice of proposed rulemaking is one example of their willingness to put something in play."

Trump and Perry's broadening strategy also may help the Energy Department's grid proposal gain support on Capitol Hill and survive inevitable court challenges.

"If your real focus here is to understand where we are with our baseload generation then you have to put those two together even though they are a pairing that, from an emissions perspective, are very different," said Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski. "I don't know that it makes it a better pairing but it probably does build a broader constituency."

Illinois Rep. John Shimkus, a senior GOP member of the House Energy and Commerce

Committee, echoed that sentiment. "For me to be able to say it's 'baseload' and say it's coal and nuclear, and have that baseload argument, that's helpful," he said.

FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee, a former top aide to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) who is now in charge of responding to DOE's proposal, says he wants to put in place an "interim" rule that would keep coal and nuclear plants online until the commission decides on long-term market changes. And he says climate advocates should be cheering the fact that nuclear plants would get a lifeline.

"One of the things that has been perplexing to me about the opposition to the interim step that I'm hoping to take to throw a lifeline to some of these baseload units is if we're going to seriously consider taking steps to mitigate U.S. emissions, nuclear power has to be part of that conversation," he said at a CQ Roll Call event last week. "To me, it seems very short-sighted to simultaneously stress the need to mitigate carbon emissions and not care about maintaining our nuclear fleet moving forward."

The Trump administration has largely managed to avoid criticism from nuclear backers for its efforts to pull back other federal climate programs that could have benefited the industry. Under Trump they are also getting much-wanted attention to their priorities, such as Yucca Mountain, a comprehensive review of U.S. nuclear energy policy led by the White House, and a conditional commitment to provide additional financing for the over-budget Vogtle nuclear project in Georgia.

"From our perspective, [we see] a real re-commitment to, frankly, the most important clean energy resource in the country," said Rich Powell, the executive director of the ClearPath Foundation, a conservative group that backs low-emissions energy sources.

"They may not call that a climate strategy, or a climate play," Powell added. "But in actuality, that is a very important measure on carbon."

There's also a legal upside of expanding the target audience beyond coal, said Alison Silverstein, an analyst who worked on DOE grid study earlier this year.

"Nuclear is still in the game principally because the secretary glommed onto the term baseload and defined it as coal and nuclear. And there is now ... no way to separate them," she said. "If you are trying to find a legal argument to keep coal plants open with a FERC rule, the broader you can make the applicability, the harder it is to lose an argument that the rule is overly discriminatory."

But Silverstein, a former top aide to ex-FERC Chairman Pat Wood, added: "If I were owning nuclear generation within Entergy, FirstEnergy or Exelon, I'd be keeping my head down and let the coal guys do the work, and seeing what I can get."

Many coal plants, she said, are no longer baseload providers but that "nuclear is the true baseload resource."

For all the talk of aligning coal with nuclear despite their often disparate missions, Illinois Rep. [Bobby Rush](#) said don't expect him or his fellow Democrats to embrace coal anytime soon.

"That was the obvious attempt to protect coal by adding nuclear to it but I don't think that dog's going to hunt," he said. "I don't see any Democrats who want to change their position on coal by the fact of them adding nuclear. I think that, for the foreseeable future, coal is not going to be one of the options."

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Husband of former Trump household aide scores government job [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 02/02/2018 05:53 PM EDT

A home improvement contractor married to one of Donald and Melania Trump's former household staffers is now working as an official at the Environmental Protection Agency, the latest example of someone with a personal connection to the Trump family finding work in the administration.

New Jersey-based Steve Kopec joined EPA's Region 2 office in New York as a special assistant on Dec. 18, according to a memo obtained by POLITICO. "Steve comes to us from private industry, where he fashioned his career around customer service and organizational efficiencies," EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez wrote in the memo. "Steve is an experienced manager with skills in team building, management and organization."

According to public records, Kopec previously ran a contracting business from his home in Haskell, New Jersey, called Steve's Tools in Motion. Kopec's wife, Dagmara, previously worked for the Trump family in New York, according to a person familiar with her situation.

Photographs posted on Facebook in recent months show the Kopecs visiting the White House and mingling with senior administration officials.

Trump, who appointed his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner to senior White House roles, has made a habit of appointing people with close ties to his family or businesses rather than experienced policymakers or political hands. His White House social media director, Dan Scavino, started working for him years ago as a [caddy](#), and his first [security director](#), Keith Schiller, traveled with him from the Trump Organization to the White House.

In June, Trump appointed Lynne Patton, a party planner who arranged events at Trump golf courses as well as Eric Trump's 2014 wedding, to head the New York office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Scott Amey, the Project on Government Oversight's general counsel, said there has been a

pattern of "questionable hiring" across both Republican and Democratic administrations for decades, noting that presidents' friends and acquaintances often get tapped for ambassadorships and other top job.

But hiring people at government agencies with little relevant experience can backfire, he said.

"If you put friends in high places and they don't have the proper qualifications it can have disastrous results for the agency and for taxpayers," Amey said. "We hope that public service positions are filled with people that are qualified to best serve the public interest."

Steve Kopec did not answer multiple calls to his office line and didn't respond to multiple requests for comment via email. Dagmara Kopec did not respond to multiple emails. Lopez, the EPA Region 2 administrator, also did not respond to questions about the circumstances of Steve Kopec's hiring.

The White House declined to offer an on-the-record response to questions about Kopec's hiring. "We appreciate Mr. Kopec's service," a White House official said.

It's unclear who made the decision to hire Kopec, or whether EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was involved. Pruitt, the former Oklahoma state attorney general, has grown close to Trump in recent months and is eyeing other jobs in the administration.

"Mr. Kopec is a hard-working, dedicated employee and we appreciate his service, in supporting environmental protection efforts in New York, New Jersey, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico," EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement.

An EPA official added that Kopec "performs administrative and support services" for the agency's Region 2 administrator. The official said he isn't writing policy for the agency and does not serve in a technical or scientific role.

Kopec, according to the official, speaks four languages and travels multiple hours a day to the EPA office in New York from his home in New Jersey.

Other administration officials stressed that Kopec does not hold a senior position at the agency, with one official saying he makes \$66,215 a year.

Both Dagmara and Steve Kopec are originally from Poland. Steve often goes by his Polish name, Slawomir.

The Kopecs appear to have made repeated visits to the White House in recent months.

One photo posted in September 2017 shows Dagmara Kopec posing on the South Lawn of the White House with communications director Hope Hicks, counselor Kellyanne Conway and press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Photos from January — including one with Steve Kopec, Melania Trump and the president —

appear to be from a White House Christmas party.

Another photo posted by Kopec in September shows a plate of food with the caption, "My first dinner at the White House."

He also posted a photo of himself sitting in a yellow chair in what appeared to be the White House Diplomatic Reception Room. The picture caption reads: "I wait for my guest." It wasn't clear whom he meant.

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To: Kim Strassel[kim.strassel@wsj.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 9/11/2017 4:52:44 PM
Subject: Hey Kim -

Hope you had a great weekend.

Without attribution, if you are still interested in this, on Saturday the Associated Press' reporters Michael Biesecker and Jason Dearen and their editors, allowed a paid intern who was at the EPA for less than one-year to speak into their story and portray him as some sort of expert to discredit the work being done by President Trump, Administrator Pruitt, Governor Scott and others on Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. It's just the latest example of how the Associated Press – which is supposed to be the gold standard for journalism – are deliberately misleading the public about the EPA's efforts regarding Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma. If you need anything else please let me know.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/ap-exclusive-flooding-threatens-toxic-sites-irma-nears-49718959>

RESEARCH ...

The Associated Press reports that Stephen Sweeney conducted a Superfund flooding study, when his LinkedIn page shows that he was a paid intern. “The EPA needs to do a better job helping people who live near Superfund sites stay informed with accurate information, said Stephen Sweeney, a former employee in EPA's office of policy and one of the American University researchers who conducted the Superfund flooding study. ‘These residents need to be aware of their surroundings, and what could be in their water and the floodwater,’ Sweeney said. ‘There needs to be some sort of public communication. Either mass distribution of information or evacuating residents — it's up to the agency to make that call.’” (The Associated Press, [AP Exclusive: Flooding threatens toxic sites as Irma nears](#), 09/09/17)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sweeneystephen1>

Additionally, according to Federal Data Center on all government employees, Stephen J. Sweeney was a paid intern – with the official title of Administration and Office Support Student Trainee. “Sweeney, Stephen J: GS 04: Annual Salary \$31,521: Official Title: Washington Administration and Office Support Student Trainee.” (www.fedsdatacenter.com, Accessed 09/09/17)

The Associated Press also cited former EPA employee Betsy Southerland who was caught lying about why she left the agency. “A risk analysis by EPA concluded in 2012 that flooding at such sites in South Florida could pose a risk to public health by spreading contaminated soil and groundwater. Flooding could disturb dangerous pollutants and wash it onto nearby property or contaminate groundwater, including personal wells, said Elizabeth "Betsy" Southerland, who retired last month as director of science and technology in EPA's Office of Water after 30 years

at the agency. ‘The agency needs to quickly respond with careful monitoring after the storm,’ said Southerland, who has criticized EPA's current leadership under President Donald Trump.” (The Associated Press, AP Exclusive: Flooding threatens toxic sites as Irma nears, 09/09/17)

The Wall Street Journal: EPA Resignation Facts: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-resignation-facts-1502146629>

Documents to a FOIA request for Elizabeth Southerland, showed she retired due to family issues, not to do President Trump’s budget. “A senior employee at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made a big stink about leaving the agency earlier this month over President Trump’s proposed 2018 budget and the direction of the new administration, but new documents show she might not have been telling the whole story. Elizabeth Southerland penned a memo to her EPA colleagues in which she lamented potential budget cuts to the agency outlined in Trump’s FY18 budget, released in May. Presidential budgets are rarely, if ever, approved let alone enacted. Still, Southerland wrote in her retirement memo: [T]he President’s FY18 budget proposes cuts to state and tribal funding as draconian as the cuts to EPA, while at the same time reassigning a number of EPA responsibilities to the states and tribes. Later in the memo, she continued her war on the Trump administration, declaring: “It may take a few years and even an environmental disaster, but I am confident that Congress and the courts will eventually restore all the environmental protections repealed by this administration because the majority of the American people recognize that this protection of public health and safety is right and it is just.” That memo went public August 1, but documents obtained by NTK Network through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request reveal Southerland, who made headlines for her parting shots at the Trump administration, may have left out key details about her departure. In an email to a colleague dated July 26, 2017, Southerland explained her retirement decision was announced internally in June, and gives the reason why: Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” (Need To Know Network, 08/28/17)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2017 4:30 PM
To: 'Kim Strassel' <kim.strassel@wsj.com>
Subject: DRAFT -- Double Standard By The A/P

Kim –

Without attribution wanted to make sure you saw this story about the mistakes and bias that comes from the Associated Press’ Michael Biesecker.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2017/09/07/what-prompted-the-epa-to-attack-an-ap-reporter-over-his-accurate-harvey-reporting/?utm_term=.0723c078736f

Specifically speaking, Biesecker wrote a story about Pruitt's emails that was quickly rebuked by The Oklahoman. Then he knowingly wrote a false story (not once but twice) about a meeting that never occurred between Pruitt and the CEO of Dow Chemical. Then his colleague went to Houston unannounced, literally got in a boat (can show you the emails) while people were still trapped in their homes and claimed that since the EPA staff was not on site at flooded Superfund sites (toxic land sites) that the entire agency was being unresponsive. They were in their boats on Wednesday the day the storm ended. We put out a press release pushing back against the false narrative – EPA employees who were in our command centers were in tears in joy because we had their backs.

APRIL 2017 – Associated Press' Michael Biesecker wrote: "AP Exclusive: Pesticide maker tries to kill risk study despite and on the record statement saying it did not happen." "We have had no meetings with Dow on this topic and we are reviewing petitions as they come in, giving careful consideration to sound science and good policymaking," said J.P. Freire, EPA's associate administrator for public affairs." ([The Associated Press](#), 04/20/17)

JUNE 2015 – Associated Press writes a story about Pruitt that was quickly rebuked from The Oklahoman. (See bottom of the email as it's behind a paywall)
<http://www.oklahoman.com/some-in-media-remain-bothered-by-pruitts-relationship-with-energy-industry/article/5553581>

JUNE 2017 – Associated Press' Michael Biesecker wrote: "EPA chief met with Dow CEO before deciding on pesticide ban," despite this statement in their story. "Asked by the AP in April whether Pruitt had met with Dow executives or lobbyists before his decision, EPA spokesman J.P. Freire replied: 'We have had no meetings with Dow on this topic.'" ([The Associated Press](#), 06/27/17)

JULY 2017 – The Associated Press finally issues a correction.
<https://apnews.com/2350d7be5e24469ab445089bf663cdcb>

JULY 2017 – The Associated Press report a new wire story and finally include a statement from Dow Chemical and the EPA (which they decided not to use for their story in June) about the meeting never happening. EPA says Pruitt meeting with Dow Chemical head was canceled. "The Environmental Protection Agency and Dow Chemical said Friday that a planned meeting in March between EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and the company's CEO never took place. The meeting was listed on Pruitt's schedule and reported by The Associated Press on Tuesday. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement that Pruitt and Dow's Andrew

Liveris did have ‘a brief introduction in passing’ during an energy conference in Houston. She said “no substantive issues” were discussed. Rachelle Schikorra, a spokeswoman for Dow, said the formal meeting ‘never happened due to schedule conflicts.’ The meeting still appeared on Pruitt’s schedule, which was obtained by The Associated Press.” (The Associated Press, 06/30/17)

AUGUST 2017 – The Associated Press’ Michael Biesecker from Washington along with a colleague in Texas, writes a story headlined ‘AP EXCLUSIVE: Toxic waste sites flooded; EPA not on scene.’ <http://www.statesman.com/news/local/exclusive-toxic-waste-sites-flooded-epa-not-scene/6C2GjwTzXrEmVk3v2IqdOL/>

Here’s the deal, when an AP reporter not once, not twice, but three times makes mistakes and misleads Americans, the Associated Press rally behind their reporter. But when the mistake is against a Democrat, the immediately fire the reporter. Because in 2013, when the Associated Press made a mistake against one of Bill Clinton’s closest friends, Democrat Terry McAuliffe they fired the reporter (Bob Lewis) and editor (Deana Potter). It might be worth doing an editorial on and/or checking in with the Associated Press’ Julie Pace and Sally Buzbee (Julie Pace / jpace@ap.org or Sally Buzbee / sbuzbee@ap.org) to see why the AP has two different standards on how they hold their reporters and editors accountable when a mistake is made against a Hillary Clinton Democrat (McAuliffe) and a member of Trump’s cabinet.

In 2013, the Associated Press fired Bob Lewis and his editor Dena Potter for reporting a false story – which was retracted in less than 60 minutes – about one of Bill and Hillary Clinton’s best friends, Democrat Terry McAuliffe. “The Associated Press has fired its veteran Virginia politics reporter Bob Lewis on the heels of his erroneous report about gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe — a move that came as a shock to the politicians and journalists who have worked with Lewis during his two-decade tenure in Richmond. The decision, which was made Monday, came on the heels of an Oct. 9 report in which Lewis alleged that McAuliffe had lied to a federal official investigating a death benefits scam. The Associated Press retracted the story less than two hours after it went up, and Lewis immediately took responsibility for the mistake. Dena Potter, the Richmond-based news editor who edited Lewis’s report, has also been fired. The news, first reported by Huffington Post, was confirmed by POLITICO on Monday afternoon.” (Politico, 10/21/13)

The Columbia Journalism Review wrote that the Associated Press was correct to fire Bob Lewis for reporting false information against Democrat Terry McAuliffe. “Many journalists are outraged the AP would fire its longtime Virginia capitol reporter over one serious mistake that was retracted in 98 minutes. There’s even a petition demanding that the AP reinstate him and two other editors who were also fired. As much as I truly hate to write this, and as much as I empathize as a fellow journalist, the AP was right to fire capitol statehouse reporter Bob Lewis and the supervisor who edited the story. In his 112-word story, Lewis accused Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe of lying to a federal investigator about a death benefits scam in Rhode Island, then didn’t give the candidate enough time to respond. Lewis wrongly believed the

initials TM in court documents referred to McAuliffe. They did not.” (The Columbia Journalism Review, 10/28/13)

<https://twitter.com/jpaceDC/status/904400918535430144>

Sally Buzbee: “We stand by our original reporting and provided the EPA with ample time to respond to our questions. We included the EPA’s responses when they were provided.” Executive Editor Sally Buzbee waded into the dispute with this statement.” (The Washington Post, 09/07/17)

McAuliffe and the Clintons: A friendship as close as family, with benefits, risks for both - https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/the-mcauliffes-and-the-clintons-a-friendship-as-close-as-family/2013/10/27/aaaac252-3d7d-11e3-a94f-b58017bfee6c_story.html?utm_term=.3218a1c89382

If you need anything else please let me know.

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What prompted the EPA to attack an AP reporter over his accurate Harvey reporting?

The Washington Post

Eric Wimple

September 7, 2017

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2017/09/07/what-prompted-the-epa-to-attack-an-ap-reporter-over-his-accurate-harvey-reporting/?utm_term=.0723c078736f

The Environmental Protection Agency is all over Michael Biesecker, a reporter for the Associated Press. His reading habits, for instance. “We are able to see who opens our emails,” says an EPA official, referring to press-release blasts sent out by the agency. “Michael very rarely opens a positive story about [EPA Administrator] Scott Pruitt. He only opens stories

where he tries to create problems.”

Scrutiny of Biesecker’s press-release consumption amped up in the summer months, after a significant dustup between the two organizations. In late June, Biesecker reported that Pruitt had “met privately with the chief executive of Dow Chemical shortly before reversing his agency’s push to ban a widely used pesticide after health studies showed it can harm children’s brains, according to records obtained by The Associated Press.”

Except that the private meeting didn’t really happen, though it was indeed listed on a schedule obtained by the AP. Scheduling conflicts prevented it from taking place. The AP ran a correction stating, in part, “A spokeswoman for the EPA says the meeting listed on the schedule was canceled, though Pruitt and [Dow Chemical CEO Andrew] Liveris did have a ‘brief introduction in passing.’”

Along with the correction, the AP ran a new story with more information about the non-meeting: “The EPA did not respond to inquiries about the scheduled meeting before the AP story was published and later did not state on the record that the meeting had been canceled.” (An EPA official protests that, indeed, the agency did respond before the story was published). The New York Times, by the way, made the very same error.

Following that episode, the EPA pulled Biesecker from its master email list. “He’s more than welcome to visit our website,” says an EPA official, noting that there are some 50 AP reporters on the blast list — and Biesecker can get the releases from them. But why de-list the guy? “We don’t think he’s a trustworthy reporter,” says the EPA official.

The evaluation of untrustworthiness, argues the official, stems from the Dow-Pruitt meeting story, plus a previous instance in which Biesecker — along with staffer Adam Kealoha Causey — wrote an article based on emails from Pruitt’s previous work as Oklahoma attorney general. “Newly obtained emails underscore just how closely Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt coordinated with fossil fuel companies while serving as Oklahoma’s state attorney general, a position in which he frequently sued to block federal efforts to curb planet-warming carbon emissions,” notes the lead of the piece.

An EPA official cited an editorial in the Oklahoman taking issue with the story. “The fact Pruitt regularly corresponded and dealt with energy industry officials as attorney general of a state where energy is the No. 1 industry should not be surprising nor should it, by itself, be considered nefarious,” wrote the newspaper.

Other alleged Biesecker infractions have also upset the EPA. In June, Biesecker forwarded to the EPA press office a news release from Investigative Reporters and Editors announcing that Pruitt had won the organization's "Golden Padlock" award "recognizing the most secretive U.S. agency or individual." Noted the EPA official via email, "this unnecessary email reiterates his dislike for Mr. Pruitt."

So there was distrust in the water when Biesecker and the AP landed on Hurricane Harvey. A trail of emails shows that the wire service decided early on how it would focus its investigative efforts: Houston has long been a petrochemical hub, with \$50 billion in chemical plant construction since 2013. The city's deep roots in this industry mean that companies have left behind a fair number of messes, some of them qualifying as EPA Superfund sites. A team of AP journalists wanted to know how these sites would fare underwater.

On Aug. 17, more than a week before Harvey's landfall, the AP requested a copy of EPA's "screening analysis" involving Superfund sites around floodplains or in danger of sea-level rise. As Harvey later bounced out of Texas and into Louisiana, the AP sprung into action, checking out flooded Superfund sites — by foot and by boat — and pressing the EPA for information. Here's an Aug. 30 email inquiry obtained by the Erik Wemple Blog: "How many Superfund sites are underwater? Specific locations? What monitoring are state and federal regulators doing this week? Are they visiting sites by boat? Are they sampling floodwater? What specific actions are they taking to potentially mitigate the risk of hazardous materials migrating off site due to flooding?" It continued pressing those issues over the following days.

On Sept. 2, Biesecker and colleague Jason Dearen showed the results of their efforts under the provocative and alarming headline, "AP EXCLUSIVE: Toxic waste sites flooded, EPA not on scene." In all, the outlet had visited seven Superfund sites in the Houston region. Several hours after the AP issued its story, the EPA responded with a statement indicating that it had seen aerial imagery showing that 13 of 41 sites were flooded and were "experiencing possible damage." The statement started out by denouncing "misleading and inaccurate reporting" on the topic.

The AP adjusted its article, but not its narrative:

The statement confirmed the AP's reporting that the EPA had not yet been able to physically visit the Houston-area sites, saying the sites had "not been accessible by response personnel." EPA staff had checked on two Superfund sites in Corpus Christi on Thursday and found no

significant damage.

AP journalists used a boat to document the condition of one flooded Houston-area Superfund site, but accessed others with a vehicle or on foot. The EPA did not respond to questions about why its personnel had not yet been able to do so.

The next day, the EPA did something that federal agencies, as a general proposition, do not do. It put a news release on the EPA website blasting not just a news outlet, but a specific reporter. With attitude, too.

Yesterday, the Associated Press' Michael Biesecker wrote an incredibly misleading story about toxic land sites that are under water.

Despite reporting from the comfort of Washington, Biesecker had the audacity to imply that agencies aren't being responsive to the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey. Not only is this inaccurate, but it creates panic and politicizes the hard work of first responders who are actually in the affected area.

Here's the truth: through aerial imaging, EPA has already conducted initial assessments at 41 Superfund sites – 28 of those sites show no damage, and 13 have experienced flooding. This was left out of the original story, along with the fact that EPA and state agencies worked with responsible parties to secure Superfund sites before the hurricane hit. Leaving out this critical information is misleading.

In a chat with the Erik Wemple Blog, a second EPA official criticized the AP for allegedly getting in over its head. "I've never experienced in my career at EPA this kind of thing happening, where the reporter shows up at a devastated site and makes his own determination," says the official, arguing that the required skills are technical and exacting. Nothing, in other words, that a generalist scribe could profitably undertake. It's far better, said EPA officials, to join agency experts on one of their ride-along tours, as journalists from ABC, CBS, CNBC, CNN and Bloomberg did on Monday. "Crews were able to take videos, photographs and talk directly with technical staff and subject matter experts on the ground," reads an EPA news release/damage-control document on the tour. "Boats were on the water determining impacts at the temporary armored cap in the San Jacinto River, to provide access to the crews."

Much of the anger within the EPA stemmed from the AP's headlining conclusion that the agency was "not on scene." "The sites are flooded — I don't know what we're supposed to do," says one of the EPA officials. The headline was later changed to, "AP EXCLUSIVE: Toxic waste sites flooded in Houston area."

Asked about the EPA's charges that the wire service omitted key facts and generally placed the government agency in a bad light, AP spokeswoman Emily Leshner responded, "We stand by our original reporting and provided the EPA with ample time to respond to our questions. We included the EPA's responses when they were provided." Executive Editor Sally Buzbee waded into the dispute with this statement: "AP's exclusive story was the result of on-the-ground reporting at Superfund sites in and around Houston, as well as AP's strong knowledge of these sites and EPA practices. We object to the EPA's attempts to discredit that reporting by suggesting it was completed solely from 'the comforts of Washington' and stand by the work of both journalists who jointly reported and wrote the story."

Those are strong words, though they're too few. Buzbee would have done well to lament the trajectory of Biesecker's treatment by the EPA: He makes a single mistake in a story based on original reporting and a records request — then he publishes a hard-edged enterprise piece that displeases those in power. He also engages in some snippy emailing. Based on these considerations, the EPA places its full authority behind the imperative of crushing him.

There is no question that reporters lack the capacity to deliver laboratory-quality assessments of the dangers posed by inundated Superfund sites. And the original headline was a touch on the harsh side. Yet the AP story was factually sound, it was an act of enterprise, and it showed editorial independence. As a taxpayer, would you prefer an Associated Press that waits for agency minders to escort its people to the sites, or an Associated Press that braves the elements on its own?

Those considerations notwithstanding, the EPA chose an ad hominem form of pushback, though an agency official dissents from this characterization. "This wasn't personal. It's about his reporting," says the official. "It's not about who he is as a person."

Note that the attacks from agency officials against the AP and its Washington-based environmental reporter are hatched from the comfort of anonymity.

We'll be seeing more of this approach to the media, of course. An EPA official tells this blog that the release slamming Biesecker boosted morale. "I was with 20 to 30 career folks who were appalled by the story and they nearly teared up when press release went out. ... This administration was defending their hard work and dedication," said the official.

Pruitt's dealings with energy industry continue to agitate

Editorial

June 2015,

<http://www.oklahoman.com/some-in-media-remain-bothered-by-pruitts-relationship-with-energy-industry/article/5553581>

The disdain that some in the media have for President Trump and members of his administration is evident regularly. Recent coverage related to EPA administrator Scott Pruitt provides an example of interest to locals because of Pruitt's Oklahoma ties.

A former state senator, Pruitt won election as attorney general in 2010, and was easily re-elected in 2014. From the beginning he made it clear he would actively oppose Obama administration overreach, particularly regulations that had the potential to harm businesses and individuals.

The administration kept Pruitt's "federalism" unit busy, as his office filed at least 14 lawsuits against the Environmental Protection Agency. The most high-profile of those were fights against the Clean Power Plan, which mandated cuts that all states had to make to greenhouse gas emissions, and the Waters of the United States rule, which greatly expanded the EPA's control over bodies of water such as ponds and creeks. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually stayed the CPP and an appeals court put the water rule on hold.

Pruitt's nomination as EPA administrator drew swift and strident opposition from environmentalists and some in the media who said Trump's confirmation would essentially be placing the fox in charge of the henhouse. Both sectors remain upset.

An Associated Press story from Washington last week about emails Pruitt sent and received as attorney general did what it could to further establish Pruitt as a minion for the oil and gas industry — which environmentalists see as dead set on ruining the earth as we know it.

The AP, a wire service used by media outlets around the world including The Oklahoman, said the emails “underscore just how closely” Pruitt “coordinated with fossil fuel companies” as Oklahoma's AG, “a position in which he frequently sued to block federal efforts to curb planet-warming carbon emissions.”

That's quite an opening paragraph. Pruitt didn't just work with energy companies while attorney general — he worked “closely” with “fossil fuel companies” (the ultimate bogey men) to essentially keep global warming from abating.

The AP report went on to note that some of Pruitt's emails involved the Domestic Energy Producers Alliance, a trade group that, as AP pointed out, includes “billionaire Harold Hamm, a political backer of Pruitt and a frequent adviser to President Donald Trump.”

We've always found it interesting how some in the media are quick to identify conservatives (such as Hamm) as “billionaires.” The Koch brothers, for example, aren't just supporters of conservative (and other) causes. They're “billionaire” supporters. The tag is intended to touch a nerve with those who have a problem with the “greedy” 1 percent — but only those 1 percent who don't share their worldview.

Pruitt was rightfully criticized for not promptly turning over emails to Democratic senators prior to his confirmation vote earlier this year. And it's possible this latest batch of emails could provide additional fodder for criticism. But the fact Pruitt regularly corresponded and dealt with energy industry officials as attorney general of a state where energy is the No. 1 industry should not be surprising nor should it, by itself, be considered nefarious.

To: Jonathan Murphy[jmurphy@washingtonmedia.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 12/20/2017 4:31:47 PM
Subject: RE: Communications Help

Let's talk after Christmas. From our previous experience, this process takes about 6-9 months.

From: Jonathan Murphy [mailto:jmurphy@washingtonmedia.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 11:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Communications Help

Hi Jahan,

I hope this note finds you well. We worked together briefly in the Senate when I was with Senator John Warner and you were with Leader McConnell and we have also met when out with mutual friend Zach Gillan.

I wanted to reach out and see if the EPA plans to put out an RFP or use an outside firm in any capacity for communications/monitoring/media relations/digital going forward. Any work we would do with your team would be lead by Bush/RNC/Senate GOP alums, and we welcome the opportunity to work with Administrator Pruitt on his initiatives and programs. Our work is scalable and I am happy to put something together should it be of interest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Jonathan

--

Jonathan Murphy

Director of Media Relations

Washington Media Group

1250 Eye Street, NW | Suite 800 | Washington, DC 20005

O: 202-628-1280 | jmurphy@washingtonmedia.com

<http://www.washingtonmedia.com/>

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Flynn, Mike[Flynn.Mike@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 2:16:06 PM
Subject: Re: Definers

I'll contact our budget team and get the contract process started today. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 10:12 AM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

George, that is fine to open up the competitive bidding process, but that needs to happen TODAY. This has been dragging on for weeks and weeks, and we don't need this to take any longer.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 9:13 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

Jahan,

I spoke with our budget team yesterday. Because this would be a \$ 120,000 contract, we cannot move forward without going through a competitive bidding process. In addition, this cost is more than OPA's budget. In the past, we have solicited funds from the program offices to reduce the portion covered by OPA. Other offices have contributed in exchange for receiving the clips once a day.

I can start the process of soliciting funds and competing the contract. If you and Liz want me to proceed, I'll get a time estimate from our budget team.

Our contact at Definers has still not returned my request for a demo. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 8:50 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 1:59:48 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA News Highlights 12.19.17
EPA News Highlights 12.19.17.docx

EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

The Weekly Standard: There's No Scandal at the EPA

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich. Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

Chicago Tribune: EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood. The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site. The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump. "E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.) Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt. But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump

Bloomberg: Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp. The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals. "It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Reuters: EPA seeks comment on carbon rule replacement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday issued a notice that it wants public input for a possible replacement of Obama-era regulations on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants that the agency is repealing. The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release. The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. "The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

The Hill: EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices. The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a "sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices" in Administrator

Scott Pruitt's office at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show. The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt's arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs. Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head. He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

National News Highlights 12.19.17

Reuters: US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump. The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote. The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said. With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain. Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The Washington Post: Trump team's meeting with Mueller's office poised to ratchet up tensions

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared. But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump. People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials.

The Wall Street Journal: Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP

Bill

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation. That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law. The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less. The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Weekly Standard

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock,

Designers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency's leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt's team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes's feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren't simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency's director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the Times in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt's team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an "authoritarian" regime wanted to "hunt down ideological subversives," it wouldn't use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The Times is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that "transparency matters a lot to me" might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often "transparency" only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

The Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-east-chicago-epa-orders-st-1219-20171218-story.html>

EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

By Craig Lyons, 12/18/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood.

The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site.

The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

"We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement.

The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.

The new agreements come almost a week after the EPA said the costs to remove contaminated soil from two neighborhoods on the Superfund site could quadruple from what was initially estimated.

The EPA said the cost anticipated for the two residential zones of the Calumet neighborhood are expected to increase from the estimated \$22.8 million to an estimated \$84.9 million.

The EPA said it based the initial cost estimate on sampling done at 7 percent of the homes in those two residential areas, according to documents, but now that testing has been done at 90 percent of the properties, the data showed more the remediate would require more resources.

The EPA's remediation plan for zones 2 and 3 includes excavation of contaminated soil to a maximum depth of 24 inches; disposal of the contaminated material; and restoring the yards once new soil is filled in, according to EPA documents.

The U.S.S. Lead Superfund site is one of 21 that Pruitt put on a list of sites in need of immediate and intense attention. Pruitt visited East Chicago in April and it was the first Superfund site he had went to after taking office.

Pruitt last week put the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site on a list of 21 sites across the county in need of immediate and intense attention, according to a press release.

"Getting toxic land sites cleaned up and revitalized is of the utmost importance to the communities across the country that are affected by these sites," Pruitt said, in a statement. "I have charged the Superfund Task Force to immediately and intently develop plans for each of these sites to ensure they are thoughtfully addressed with urgency."

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/blog/epa-bureaucrats-complain-pruitt-doesnt-want-conspire-trump/>

EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

By Elizabeth Harrington, 12/19/17

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump.

"E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.)

Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt.

But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump:

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an 'environmental catastrophe.' Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

Another take: people notice when employees publicly criticize their boss. And if it's in politics, Republican operatives might want to know if employees are actively working to sabotage a Republican administration.

The Times doesn't mention that the bureaucrats—Elizabeth Southerland, Michael Cox, and Gary Morton—all either leaked to liberal news outlets to criticize Pruitt and Trump, or attended "resistance" rallies.

Allan Blutstein, the lawyer who is vice president of FOIA Operations at the Republican group America Rising, told the Times that he submitted the requests for "employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt."

"He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work," the Times wrote.

"Compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work." Read another way: Republicans want to see if these career bureaucrats who hate Pruitt are working to sabotage the administration.

I wonder why Republicans would worry about that?

"Washington Bureaucrats Are Quietly Working to Undermine Trump's Agenda," Bloomberg reported Monday, just a day after the Times defense of the three resistance bureaucrats at the EPA.

Bloomberg writes, "Some of the roughly two million career staff have found ways to obstruct, slow down, or simply ignore their new leader, the president."

The article even prints one career bureaucrat's "checklist" for resistance. Joel Clement, a former bureaucrat in the Department of Interior, says others should start "leaking documents," and "slowing down the implementation of the policy," after first trying a "legitimate approach before you obstruct," of course.

The Times says now bureaucrats are living under a "wave of fear," and that they could get in trouble for tweeting "critical comments" against EPA management. (Maybe don't bad mouth your boss on social media.)

But the employees the Times highlighted don't have much to worry about.

Southerland and Cox took early retirement. Both went to a liberal Washington Post columnist Joe Davidson to publicize their dissatisfaction when they were on their way out the door.

Cox leaked his anti-Trump letter in April, which the Post ran under the headline, "EPA staffer leaves with a bang, blasting agency policies under Trump."

In his letter, Cox said he was "frankly insulted" that President Trump would visit the EPA, and that Trump did so to "give us the finger." He called the Trump administration "arrogant and callous," and accused Pruitt of having "not done your homework" on the Paris climate deal."

"Fortunately," Cox wrote, "there are other global leaders, including China and India, who understand the urgency of the problem and are taking action."

Blutstein filed a FOIA request on Cox a few days after Cox went to the Washington Post.

In August, Southerland leaked her complaints against the Trump administration to the Post, claiming she was retiring in protest. She claimed EPA wouldn't be able to do the "right thing" under Trump. A FOIA request was filed the next day.

It turns out Southerland was not retiring in protest of Trump, but said in emails that she "needed to retire to help out with family medical care."

As for Morton, he's the head of an EPA government union who has said, "The EPA as we know it might not exist any more" because of Trump.

"His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts," the Times reported.

The Times fails to mention it was a "resistance" rally, organized by Morton's union the American Federation of Government Employees.

"This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Morton now says.

I'd call it a "resistance hunt." And it's not that difficult when you do it out in the open.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-18/pruitt-s-epa-turns-to-lean-manufacturing-to-speed-up-reviews>

Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

By Eric Rosen and John Lippert, 12/18/17

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp.

The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals.

"It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Before joining the EPA, Darwin had a 20-year career in Arizona where he served as director of the Department of Environmental Quality and then as chief of operations. He led development of the state's management strategy for Governor Doug Ducey before leaving at the end of June.

Still, overhauling how the agency works may face difficulties at the EPA where many members of the 15,000 workforce have bristled under the leadership of Trump and Administrator Scott Pruitt. This year EPA ranked 22nd out of 23 mid-size federal agencies in how its employees rate the effectiveness of its senior leaders, according to a survey by the Partnership for Public

Service.

EPA is a sprawling organization, offering everything from advice on eradicating bedbugs to state-by-state data showing the first frost of autumn comes later than it ever has historically. Pruitt, who sued the agency a number of times while attorney general of Oklahoma, came into the agency pledging to scale-back its reach, leave more rulemaking and enforcement to states and get "back to basics." Critics, including Democrats in Congress, have said he's too cozy with the industries he's supposed to regulate and wondered about the need for a \$25,000 soundproof "privacy booth."

Pruitt dropped Darwin's name this month at a congressional oversight hearing when explaining that the agency is "actually partnering with Toyota to begin a 'lean' process at the agency to evaluate management practices."

"The agency for many years — and this is something I found surprising — has not measured outcomes consistently," he added.

Toyota introduced lean manufacturing into the U.S. in the 1980s when it began building factories outside Japan for the first time. For a quarter century, Toyota has also had a non-profit affiliate, called the Toyota Production System Support Center, that consults with Toyota suppliers and outside manufacturers, and provides advice to organizations, such as hospitals, food banks and governments.

The EPA and several other agencies are in talks with the TSSC about a contract on how they could redesign the way they conduct environmental reviews and permit "high-priority" infrastructure projects -- pipelines, ports, bridges and the electricity grid.

Pruitt's name check of Toyota raised some initial concerns that EPA was partnering with a company that it also regulated. Since the contract under discussion would be with a non-profit affiliate, the risks aren't as great, said George Wyeth, a career EPA attorney who retired this year.

"There is a potential ethics issue here, but not a big one," Wyeth said in an interview.

Still, longtime staff members are skeptical. It's not the first time the agency has tapped a management trend, according to John O'Grady, a 31-year EPA veteran who spoke in his capacity as president of Council 238 of the American Federation of Government Employees.

"I've been through too many flavors-of-the-month, of-the-year, whatever it is. They do it intensely for a while -- and then it just goes away," he said. "I'm very skeptical."

O'Grady said he's concerned that, because the agency hasn't conducted a true workforce analysis in 20 years, any decisions about the organization won't have sufficient data. And that could lead to staff cuts when more staff may be necessary to work on the EPA's growing portfolio, he said.

Darwin said that "lean" is in some ways a misnomer, and the goal of the process at EPA isn't to cut staff.

"It's not about creating the ability to reduce the size of an organization," Darwin said. "What it can do is allow it to become more effective and more efficient so that if we do create a capacity to do more with less."

Reuters

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release.

The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

When EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt first announced he planned to repeal the Clean Power Plan, it was not clear whether the agency intended to replace it. At his first congressional hearing earlier this month, Pruitt said he planned to replace it.

The notice specifically asks for comment on measures to reduce carbon emissions directly at a power plant.

Obama's Clean Power Plan allowed states to reduce power plant emissions by using a series of different measures across their plant fleets, which some industry groups said went beyond the scope of the federal Clean Air Act.

The EPA is also asking for comment on the role and responsibility of states in regulating power plants for greenhouse gas emissions.

The notice said EPA also wants to hear from states including California and New York, which already have programs to reduce emissions from power plants, to see how their programs could interact with a replacement rule.

Environmental groups, who plan to continue challenging the agency's moves against the CPP in

court, said on Monday the agency is not serious about offering a valid replacement to the Obama-era regulation.

"A weaker replacement of the Clean Power Plan is a non-starter. Americans - who depend on EPA to protect their health and climate - deserve real solutions, not scams," said David Doniger, director of climate and clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365495-epa-chief-pruitt-had-office-swept-for-surveillance-bugs#.Wjg7sWMetRY.twitter>

EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

By Tim Cama, 12/18/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices.

The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a "sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices" in Administrator Scott Pruitt's office at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show.

The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt's arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs.

Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head.

He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

Pruitt's staff has declined to release his schedule in advance over security concerns, and the New York Times reported that he asks some employees to leave their phones behind when meeting with him.

Like other security measures, the EPA defended the surveillance sweep as a response to unprecedented threats against Pruitt, whose aggressive deregulatory agenda has angered environmentalists and many others.

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and security decisions are made by EPA's Protective Service Detail," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said.

Lisa Jackson, who was EPA administrator from 2009 to 2013 under former President Barack Obama, also had a similar security sweep undertaken in the office, Wilcox said. Apple Inc., where Jackson oversees environmental initiatives, did not respond to a request for comment.

The Washington Post reported in September that the EPA had seen more threats against Pruitt than any previous administrator.

Doug Parker, who worked at the EPA for 25 years, mostly as a special agent in the criminal investigation division, said a bug sweep of the administrator's office is unusual.

"It doesn't strike me as completely out of left field, but it's certainly not routine, even in the administrator's office," said Parker, who retired in 2016 and now leads Earth & Water Strategies, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm.

"There could be valid concerns," Parker said, pointing to national security-related conversations and foreign delegations that sometimes come to the EPA building.

“But it is certainly not something that was a routine occurrence in past administrator’s offices.”

Reuters

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/19/us-congress-poised-to-approve-biggest-tax-overhaul-in-30-years.html>

US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

By Staff, 12/19/17

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump.

The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote.

The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said.

With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain.

Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The end-of-year sprint toward passage represents a remarkable recovery of Republican fortunes

since the middle of this year, when the party's drive to dismantle former Democratic President Barack Obama's Obamacare healthcare law crumbled in the Senate and prospects for a tax overhaul seemed doomed by party infighting.

Lingering doubts about fate of the tax bill all but vanished on Monday after two of the last Senate Republican holdouts, Susan Collins and Mike Lee, agreed to support the legislation.

"I'm ready to vote," Republican Senator John Kennedy told Reuters. "I felt like we should have voted this weekend."

'New Gilded Age'

Democrats, who unanimously oppose the Republican bill, railed against it as a giveaway to corporations and the wealthy that would add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade and deepen the U.S. income gap between rich and poor.

"There are so many rip-offs in this bill that people are going to say this is some kind of new Gilded Age," said Senator Ron Wyden, top Democrat on the Senate Tax Committee.

The House, where Republicans hold a 239-193 voting majority, was likely to see a smattering of "no" votes from Republican fiscal hawks and lawmakers from the high-tax states of New York, New Jersey and California who oppose a provision that would scale back a popular deduction for state and local taxes.

"It's still a bill that's going to give tax relief to other parts of America on the backs of New Yorkers. So I'm still going to vote 'no,'" said Republican Representative Dan Donovan of New York.

The legislation would also repeal a federal fine imposed on Americans under Obamacare for not obtaining health insurance coverage, a change that could undermine the 2010 healthcare law formally known as the Affordable Care Act.

Vice President Mike Pence took the precaution of rescheduling a trip to Egypt and Israel for January to be on hand this week, just in case his tie-breaking voting power is needed to ensure Senate passage of the tax bill.

Republicans, who control the 100-seat Senate by only a 52-48 margin, can afford to lose support from no more than two party lawmakers. Republican Senator Jeff Flake was still undecided late on Monday. Senator John McCain, who has brain cancer, was spending time with family in Arizona.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-teams-meeting-with-muellers-office-poised-to-ratchet-up-tensions/2017/12/18/15dac668-e41d-11e7-a65d-1ac0fd7f097e_story.html?utm_term=.6bed5005d264

Trump team's meeting with Mueller's office poised to ratchet up tensions

By Devlin Barrett, Josh Dawsey, and Carol Leonnig, 12/19/17

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared.

But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump.

People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials. The special counsel's office has continued to request new documents related to the campaign, and members of Mueller's team have told others they expect

to be working through much of 2018, at a minimum.

The dynamic threatens to intensify the already inflamed political atmosphere enveloping the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Even as White House lawyers have pledged to cooperate with Mueller, Trump and his allies have accused the Justice Department and FBI of bias and overreach.

The latest salvo came this past weekend, when a lawyer for the presidential transition accused Mueller of wrongfully obtaining thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration. The special counsel's office said all the material was legally obtained.

The meeting's outcome could deepen tensions as many Trump supporters question Mueller's credibility and Democrats express fear that the president will seek to fire the special counsel.

Ty Cobb, the White House lawyer overseeing the response to the Russia investigation, did not respond to phone calls and text messages seeking comment. Peter Carr, a spokesman for the special counsel, declined to comment.

White House lawyers have told the president he could be exonerated as early as the beginning of the year, after previously reassuring him that he would be cleared by Thanksgiving and Christmas, as The Washington Post previously reported. They have stated publicly that all White House interviews are over and that Mueller's team is no longer seeking White House documents.

In the meeting this week, they plan to ask Mueller's investigators if they need more information before reaching a conclusion that the probe as related to Trump is complete, according to a person familiar with the Trump team's plan who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

The question that White House lawyers will pose to the special counsel's office, according to the

person: “You’ve had all these witnesses, all these records. Is there anything else you need from the White House?”

Until now, Trump’s legal team has repeatedly pledged cooperation with Mueller’s office. A White House spokesman said there was no plan to change the strategy.

Trump’s legal team has reassured him that it sees no evidence of collusion or obstruction in the records that it turned over, White House advisers said. While the lawyers have told Trump that they expect the investigative team will continue its work related to former campaign chairman Paul Manafort deep into next year, as well as possibly Flynn, they said they believe Mueller should be close to wrapping up the focus on the current White House.

Trump himself has expressed frustration with the probe but has shown optimism that it will not touch him. He told associates recently that he harbors no deep concern over the investigation and noted that his lawyers talk with Mueller’s team regularly, according to a person who spoke with Trump last week and spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

When pressed by two advisers to take the matter more seriously and asked why he is so confident in his lawyers, Trump brushed off the concerns. “He is living in his own world,” the person said, predicting that Trump would erupt at some point in 2018 if the probe continued to drag on.

Another associate said that even in private, Trump is “confident, even arrogant” that he has done nothing wrong.

“There is no collusion,” the president said at the White House on Sunday, after saying he was not planning to fire Mueller.

Among people familiar with the probe, there is widespread skepticism that the special counsel’s investigation is drawing to a close.

Already, Manafort and his former deputy Rick Gates have been indicted on money-laundering and other charges related to work they did in Ukraine before the 2016 race. Two others have pleaded guilty and are cooperating, giving investigators new leads to pursue. Agents have gathered huge volumes of documents and conducted their first round of interviews with White House officials.

As recently as last week, Mueller's team was still asking questions about the firing of James B. Comey as FBI director, one person said.

Legal experts said Mueller would have little incentive to clear the president or other White House aides while he is seeking more information from witnesses.

"I think it's possible Mueller's team could give them an idea of how much longer they anticipate their investigation will last," said Peter Zeidenberg, the former deputy special counsel who helped investigate the leak of Valerie Plame's covert role as a CIA operative. "I would be shocked if they have a timeline anything similar to what we've heard coming from the White House."

"As far as a clean bill of health, I can't imagine they are going to be prepared to make a decision like that at this point," he said of the special counsel's team. "They are not going to be in a position to make that call until they finish this case and finish discussing all the evidence they have."

Mark Corallo, a former spokesman for Trump's legal team, said he thinks it is unlikely that the probe wraps up by the end of the year, but he said he believes it could conclude in the spring. He said that Mueller is aware of the political implications surrounding his investigation.

"Bob understands you can't have a president who is living under this cloud of uncertainty," Corallo said, adding that he believes it is possible that the special counsel will at some point call Trump's lawyers and say, "We are done with the president. There is nothing there."

The high-stakes meeting between White House lawyers and Mueller's team comes as conservative lawmakers and pundits have intensified their demands for a second special counsel to investigate the FBI, pointing to text messages between two former FBI officials discussing their dislike of Trump.

"We are now beginning to understand the magnitude of the insider bias on Mueller's team," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) said last week. Another member of the committee, Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), said Mueller and his team should wear "Democratic Donkeys or Hillary T-shirts."

A White House adviser said the president has enjoyed the attacks. In recent weeks, he has spoken to a number of Fox News hosts, Republican lawmakers and others who have castigated Mueller's team, the adviser said.

The attacks on Mueller's investigation grew this weekend after an attorney for the presidential transition told congressional investigators Saturday that thousands of pages of the organization's communications were provided to Mueller by the federal General Services Administration.

Trump's lawyers learned Mueller had the emails this month when witnesses were quizzed on the material. Some of the documents contained sensitive information that wasn't related to the Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the material.

A GSA spokeswoman declined to comment. Mueller's team said it obtained all documents legally.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-to-get-23-of-tax-cuts-for-individuals-under-gop-bill-1513644268>

Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

By Editors, 12/19/17

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation.

That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law.

The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less.

The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

America's most-affluent households, those earning \$500,000 or more a year, which account for 1% of filers, would also get \$61 billion in cuts in the first year, according to the JCT analysis. They would get a cut of \$12 billion by 2027.

That includes income earned by pass-through businesses such as partnerships and S-corporations that pay taxes on individual returns. It doesn't include the benefits of estate-tax reductions.

Much of the rest would go to businesses in the form of corporate tax cuts, according to the JCT analysis.

The tax plan took another step toward passage Monday, when Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who had been on the fence, said she would support the bill. Mr. Trump plans to sign the bill later this week.

Trump administration officials argue the business tax cuts will help individuals, too, because it will induce companies to hire more and boost workers' wages.

"I don't think it necessarily changes my life one way or another," said Lisa Joles of Concord, Ohio, who runs the heat and air-conditioning repair shop her parents started in the 1970s. Her business brought in about \$1.5 million this past year, and she takes home about \$50,000 a year. "It could give me or someone else in the middle class that little bit of extra money that they may go out and spend, and it may boost the economy, but I almost feel like that would be a short-term effect."

The muted reaction is consistent with polls showing that the tax cuts aren't very popular. A Quinnipiac University poll released last week found that 55% of those surveyed disapprove of the tax plan, compared with 26% who support it. Republicans were the only group who supported the tax plan, with the support of 66%.

Many households are still weighing how the complicated plan will affect them. The plan recasts many features of the individual tax code—doubling a child tax credit and the standard deduction for households, while narrowing deductions for state and local taxes, mortgages and the personal exemption. That means it will play out differently for many, depending on factors such as whether they live in high-tax states, have big mortgages or have many children.

Cory Dahl, 59, a pastor who lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., said that even though a few extra hundred dollars a year won't make much difference, he is happy to get it. "Five hundred dollars is not a ton of money, but I'd rather have it in my bank account than in my tax payment," he said.

Mr. Dahl has taken the standard deduction in recent years, and he lives in a church-owned home, so he has no mortgage. He thinks raising the standard deduction will help middle-class households like his.

His niece, Katie Dahl, who lives 20 miles away in Baileys Harbor, Wis., is apprehensive. She said her biggest concern is the repeal of the Affordable Care Act requirement that individuals

buy health insurance. Both Ms. Dahl, 34, and her husband, Rich Higdon, who is a musician and a potter, rely on the ACA exchange for a heavily subsidized health-insurance plan. They pay \$12 a month for a silver-level plan that covers both of them. With an income of about \$41,000 a year, Ms. Dahl says the ACA has made them both confident that they could survive as self-employed artists.

“I’m worried what the mandate will do to premiums, and if it will go so far as to start the unraveling of Obamacare, which has been a big boon to us financially,” she said.

While the middle class as a whole will see benefits, some people will end up worse off. Using an alternative measure of household income, the Tax Policy Center found that of those households in the very middle of the income distribution, making \$48,600 to \$86,100 a year, 91.3% would receive a tax cut next year. But 7.3% would receive a tax increase. By 2025, 10.9% would receive a tax increase.

Many taxpayers are worried that they will fall into that latter group. Jon Rose, 45, who runs a car-detailing shop in Carlisle, Pa., could see a cut from his current top tax rate of 25% because he runs an S corporation, a pass-through business that is eligible for a 20% deduction from business income if it meets certain conditions. His accountant told him he would likely save about \$3,000 as a result of tax changes. The problem, he said, is that his accountant also said he has about \$16,000 worth of personal exemptions that he would no longer be able to claim.

Congress has raised the child-tax credit to \$2,000 a child, but he was even dubious about how much that would help him. “I only have two kids, it’s not like I have 16,” said Mr. Rose, whose wife is a high-school teacher. “It doesn’t sound great.”

He said that if he somehow ends up saving an extra \$500 or even \$1,000, that wouldn’t mean too much to him. “I wouldn’t even notice,” he said. “It wouldn’t make any difference, especially if it’s just coming out gradually over time. If it’s \$1,000, it’s \$40 a paycheck. That’s dinner.”

Corrections & Amplifications

An earlier version of this article incorrectly reported that middle-income households would receive \$144 billion in total tax cuts over a decade under the Republican tax plan, or 10% of the

total net tax cut. It also incorrectly reported that affluent households making more than \$500,000 would receive \$171 billion in total tax cuts over a decade. Those calculations were based on an incorrect reading of tables released Monday by the Joint Committee on Taxation. The article also incorrectly reported that households making \$500,000 or more comprise 6% of total filers. They comprise 1% of total filers.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 3h

DOW RISES 5000 POINTS ON THE YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER - MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!



6.1K



8.2K



36K



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 2h

Stocks and the economy have a long way to go after the Tax Cut Bill is totally understood and appreciated in scope and size. Immediate expensing will have a big impact. Biggest Tax Cuts and Reform EVER passed. Enjoy, and create many beautiful JOBS!



5.8K



5.2K



24K



EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

The Weekly Standard: There's No Scandal at the EPA

"Another entry from the authoritarian handbook," says David Axelrod. MSNBC's Chris Hayes thinks it's a "hunt" for "ideological subversives." The public is financing "lies" to "eviscerate environmental protections," according to Robert Reich. Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate "agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration." A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees "were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this."

Chicago Tribune: EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood. The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site. The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump. "E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.) Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt. But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump

Bloomberg: Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp. The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals. "It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Reuters: EPA seeks comment on carbon rule replacement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday issued a notice that it wants public input for a possible replacement of Obama-era regulations on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants that the agency is repealing. The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release. The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. "The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

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for covert surveillance devices. The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a “sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices” in Administrator Scott Pruitt’s office at the agency’s Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show. The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt’s arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs. Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head. He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

National News Highlights 12.19.17

Reuters: US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

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The Washington Post: Trump team’s meeting with Mueller’s office poised to ratchet up tensions

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The Wall Street Journal: Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress’s Joint Committee on Taxation. That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law. The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less. The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Weekly Standard

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Definers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the Times in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt’s team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an “authoritarian” regime wanted to “hunt down ideological subversives,” it wouldn’t use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The Times is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that “transparency matters a lot to me” might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often “transparency” only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

The Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-east-chicago-epa-orders-st-1219-20171218-story.html>

EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

By Craig Lyons, 12/18/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood.

The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site.

The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

"We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement.

The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.

The new agreements come almost a week after the EPA said the costs to remove contaminated soil from two neighborhoods on the Superfund site could quadruple from what was initially estimated.

The EPA said the cost anticipated for the two residential zones of the Calumet neighborhood are expected to increase from the estimated \$22.8 million to an estimated \$84.9 million.

The EPA said it based the initial cost estimate on sampling done at 7 percent of the homes in those two residential areas, according to documents, but now that testing has been done at 90 percent of the properties, the data showed more the remediate would require more resources.

The EPA's remediation plan for zones 2 and 3 includes excavation of contaminated soil to a maximum depth of 24 inches; disposal of the contaminated material; and restoring the yards once new soil is filled in, according to EPA documents.

The U.S.S. Lead Superfund site is one of 21 that Pruitt put on a list of sites in need of immediate and intense attention. Pruitt visited East Chicago in April and it was the first Superfund site he had went to after taking office.

Pruitt last week put the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site on a list of 21 sites across the county in need of immediate and intense attention, according to a press release.

"Getting toxic land sites cleaned up and revitalized is of the utmost importance to the communities across the country that are affected by these sites," Pruitt said, in a statement. "I have charged the Superfund Task Force to immediately and intently develop plans for each of these sites to ensure they are thoughtfully addressed with urgency."

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/blog/epa-bureaucrats-complain-pruitt-doesnt-want-conspire-trump/>

EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

By Elizabeth Harrington, 12/19/17

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump.

"E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.)

Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt.

But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump:

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an 'environmental catastrophe.' Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in

Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

Another take: people notice when employees publicly criticize their boss. And if it's in politics, Republican operatives might want to know if employees are actively working to sabotage a Republican administration.

The Times doesn't mention that the bureaucrats—Elizabeth Southerland, Michael Cox, and Gary Morton—all either leaked to liberal news outlets to criticize Pruitt and Trump, or attended "resistance" rallies.

Allan Blutstein, the lawyer who is vice president of FOIA Operations at the Republican group America Rising, told the Times that he submitted the requests for "employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt."

"He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work," the Times wrote.

"Compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work." Read another way: Republicans want to see if these career bureaucrats who hate Pruitt are working to sabotage the administration.

I wonder why Republicans would worry about that?

"Washington Bureaucrats Are Quietly Working to Undermine Trump's Agenda," Bloomberg reported Monday, just a day after the Times defense of the three resistance bureaucrats at the EPA.

Bloomberg writes, "Some of the roughly two million career staff have found ways to obstruct, slow down, or simply ignore their new leader, the president."

The article even prints one career bureaucrat's "checklist" for resistance. Joel Clement, a former bureaucrat in the Department of Interior, says others should start "leaking documents," and "slowing down the implementation of the policy," after first trying a "legitimate approach before you obstruct," of course.

The Times says now bureaucrats are living under a "wave of fear," and that they could get in trouble for tweeting "critical comments" against EPA management. (Maybe don't bad mouth your boss on social media.)

But the employees the Times highlighted don't have much to worry about.

Southerland and Cox took early retirement. Both went to a liberal Washington Post columnist Joe Davidson to publicize their dissatisfaction when they were on their way out the door.

Cox leaked his anti-Trump letter in April, which the Post ran under the headline, "EPA staffer leaves with a bang, blasting agency policies under Trump."

In his letter, Cox said he was "frankly insulted" that President Trump would visit the EPA, and that Trump did so to "give us the finger." He called the Trump administration "arrogant and callous," and accused Pruitt of having "not done your homework" on the Paris climate deal.

"Fortunately," Cox wrote, "there are other global leaders, including China and India, who understand the urgency of the problem and are taking action."

Blutstein filed a FOIA request on Cox a few days after Cox went to the Washington Post.

In August, Southerland leaked her complaints against the Trump administration to the Post, claiming she was retiring in protest. She claimed EPA wouldn't be able to do the "right thing" under Trump. A FOIA request was filed the next day.

It turns out Southerland was not retiring in protest of Trump, but said in emails that she "needed to retire to help out with family medical care."

As for Morton, he's the head of an EPA government union who has said, "The EPA as we know it might not exist any more" because of Trump.

"His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts," the Times reported.

The Times fails to mention it was a "resistance" rally, organized by Morton's union the American Federation of Government Employees.

"This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Morton now says.

I'd call it a "resistance hunt." And it's not that difficult when you do it out in the open.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-18/pruitt-s-epa-turns-to-lean-manufacturing-to-speed-up-reviews>

Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

By Eric Rosen and John Lippert, 12/18/17

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp.

The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals.

"It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Before joining the EPA, Darwin had a 20-year career in Arizona where he served as director of the Department of Environmental Quality and then as chief of operations. He led development of the state's management strategy for Governor Doug Ducey before leaving at the end of June.

Still, overhauling how the agency works may face difficulties at the EPA where many members of the 15,000 workforce have bristled under the leadership of Trump and Administrator Scott Pruitt. This year EPA ranked 22nd out of 23 mid-size federal agencies in how its employees rate the effectiveness of its senior leaders, according to a survey by the Partnership for Public Service.

EPA is a sprawling organization, offering everything from advice on eradicating bedbugs to state-by-state data showing the first frost of autumn comes later than it ever has historically. Pruitt, who sued the agency a number of times while attorney general of Oklahoma, came into the agency pledging to scale-back its reach, leave more rulemaking and enforcement to states and get "back to basics." Critics, including Democrats in Congress, have said he's too cozy with the industries he's supposed to regulate and wondered about the need for a \$25,000 soundproof "privacy booth."

Pruitt dropped Darwin's name this month at a congressional oversight hearing when explaining that the agency is "actually partnering with Toyota to begin a 'lean' process at the agency to evaluate management practices."

"The agency for many years — and this is something I found surprising — has not measured outcomes consistently," he added.

Toyota introduced lean manufacturing into the U.S. in the 1980s when it began building factories outside Japan for the first time. For a quarter century, Toyota has also had a non-profit affiliate, called the Toyota Production System Support Center, that consults with Toyota suppliers and outside manufacturers, and provides advice to organizations, such as hospitals, food banks and governments.

The EPA and several other agencies are in talks with the TSSC about a contract on how they could redesign the way they conduct environmental reviews and permit "high-priority" infrastructure projects -- pipelines, ports, bridges and the electricity grid.

Pruitt's name check of Toyota raised some initial concerns that EPA was partnering with a company that it also regulated. Since the contract under discussion would be with a non-profit affiliate, the risks aren't as great, said George Wyeth, a career EPA attorney who retired this year.

"There is a potential ethics issue here, but not a big one," Wyeth said in an interview.

Still, longtime staff members are skeptical. It's not the first time the agency has tapped a management trend, according to John O'Grady, a 31-year EPA veteran who spoke in his capacity as president of Council 238 of the American Federation of Government Employees.

"I've been through too many flavors-of-the-month, of-the-year, whatever it is. They do it intensely for a while -- and then it just goes away," he said. "I'm very skeptical."

O'Grady said he's concerned that, because the agency hasn't conducted a true workforce analysis in 20 years, any decisions about the organization won't have sufficient data. And that could lead to staff cuts when more staff may be necessary to work on the EPA's growing portfolio, he said.

Darwin said that "lean" is in some ways a misnomer, and the goal of the process at EPA isn't to cut staff.

"It's not about creating the ability to reduce the size of an organization," Darwin said. "What it can do is allow it to become more effective and more efficient so that if we do create a capacity to do more with less."

Reuters

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release.

The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

When EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt first announced he planned to repeal the Clean Power Plan, it was not clear whether the agency intended to replace it. At his first congressional hearing earlier this month, Pruitt said he planned to replace it.

The notice specifically asks for comment on measures to reduce carbon emissions directly at a power plant.

Obama's Clean Power Plan allowed states to reduce power plant emissions by using a series of different measures across their plant fleets, which some industry groups said went beyond the scope of the federal Clean Air Act.

The EPA is also asking for comment on the role and responsibility of states in regulating power plants for greenhouse gas emissions.

The notice said EPA also wants to hear from states including California and New York, which already have programs to reduce emissions from power plants, to see how their programs could interact with a replacement rule.

Environmental groups, who plan to continue challenging the agency's moves against the CPP in court, said on Monday the agency is not serious about offering a valid replacement to the Obama-era regulation.

"A weaker replacement of the Clean Power Plan is a non-starter. Americans - who depend on EPA to protect their health and climate - deserve real solutions, not scams," said David Doniger, director of climate and clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365495-epa-chief-pruitt-had-office-swept-for-surveillance-bugs#.Wjg7sWMetRY.twitter>

EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

By Tim Cama, 12/18/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices.

The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a "sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices" in Administrator Scott Pruitt's office at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show.

The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt's arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs.

Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head.

He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

Pruitt's staff has declined to release his schedule in advance over security concerns, and the New York Times reported that he asks some employees to leave their phones behind when meeting with him.

Like other security measures, the EPA defended the surveillance sweep as a response to unprecedented threats against Pruitt, whose aggressive deregulatory agenda has angered environmentalists and many others.

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and security decisions are made by

EPA's Protective Service Detail," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said.

Lisa Jackson, who was EPA administrator from 2009 to 2013 under former President Barack Obama, also had a similar security sweep undertaken in the office, Wilcox said. Apple Inc., where Jackson oversees environmental initiatives, did not respond to a request for comment.

The Washington Post reported in September that the EPA had seen more threats against Pruitt than any previous administrator.

Doug Parker, who worked at the EPA for 25 years, mostly as a special agent in the criminal investigation division, said a bug sweep of the administrator's office is unusual.

"It doesn't strike me as completely out of left field, but it's certainly not routine, even in the administrator's office," said Parker, who retired in 2016 and now leads Earth & Water Strategies, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm.

"There could be valid concerns," Parker said, pointing to national security-related conversations and foreign delegations that sometimes come to the EPA building.

"But it is certainly not something that was a routine occurrence in past administrator's offices."

Reuters

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/19/us-congress-poised-to-approve-biggest-tax-overhaul-in-30-years.html>

US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

By Staff, 12/19/17

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump.

The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote.

The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said.

With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain.

Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The end-of-year sprint toward passage represents a remarkable recovery of Republican fortunes since the middle of this year, when the party's drive to dismantle former Democratic President Barack Obama's Obamacare healthcare law crumbled in the Senate and prospects for a tax overhaul seemed doomed by party infighting.

Lingering doubts about fate of the tax bill all but vanished on Monday after two of the last Senate Republican holdouts, Susan Collins and Mike Lee, agreed to support the legislation.

"I'm ready to vote," Republican Senator John Kennedy told Reuters. "I felt like we should have voted this weekend."

'New Gilded Age'

Democrats, who unanimously oppose the Republican bill, railed against it as a giveaway to corporations and the wealthy that would add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade and deepen the U.S. income gap between rich and poor.

"There are so many rip-offs in this bill that people are going to say this is some kind of new Gilded Age," said Senator Ron Wyden, top Democrat on the Senate Tax Committee.

The House, where Republicans hold a 239-193 voting majority, was likely to see a smattering of "no" votes from Republican fiscal hawks and lawmakers from the high-tax states of New York, New Jersey and California who oppose a provision that would scale back a popular deduction for state and local taxes.

"It's still a bill that's going to give tax relief to other parts of America on the backs of New Yorkers. So I'm still going to vote 'no,'" said Republican Representative Dan Donovan of New York.

The legislation would also repeal a federal fine imposed on Americans under Obamacare for not obtaining health insurance coverage, a change that could undermine the 2010 healthcare law formally known as the Affordable Care Act.

Vice President Mike Pence took the precaution of rescheduling a trip to Egypt and Israel for January to be on hand this week, just in case his tie-breaking voting power is needed to ensure Senate passage of the tax bill.

Republicans, who control the 100-seat Senate by only a 52-48 margin, can afford to lose support from no more than two party lawmakers. Republican Senator Jeff Flake was still undecided late on Monday. Senator John McCain, who has brain cancer, was spending time with family in Arizona.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-teams-meeting-with-muellers-office-poised-to-ratchet-up-tensions/2017/12/18/15dac668-e41d-11e7-a65d-1ac0fd7f097e_story.html?utm_term=.6bed5005d264

Trump team's meeting with Mueller's office poised to ratchet up tensions

By Devlin Barrett, Josh Dawsey, and Carol Leonnig, 12/19/17

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared.

But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump.

People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials. The special counsel's office has continued to request new documents related to the campaign, and members of Mueller's team have told others they expect to be working through much of 2018, at a minimum.

The dynamic threatens to intensify the already inflamed political atmosphere enveloping the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Even as White House lawyers have pledged to cooperate with Mueller, Trump and his allies have accused the Justice Department and FBI of bias and overreach.

The latest salvo came this past weekend, when a lawyer for the presidential transition accused Mueller of wrongfully obtaining thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration. The special counsel's office said all the material was legally obtained.

The meeting's outcome could deepen tensions as many Trump supporters question Mueller's credibility and Democrats express fear that the president will seek to fire the special counsel.

Ty Cobb, the White House lawyer overseeing the response to the Russia investigation, did not respond to phone calls and text messages seeking comment. Peter Carr, a spokesman for the special counsel, declined to comment.

White House lawyers have told the president he could be exonerated as early as the beginning of the year, after previously reassuring him that he would be cleared by Thanksgiving and Christmas, as The Washington Post previously reported. They have stated publicly that all White House interviews are over and that Mueller's team is no longer seeking White House documents.

In the meeting this week, they plan to ask Mueller's investigators if they need more information before reaching a conclusion that the probe as related to Trump is complete, according to a person familiar with the Trump team's plan who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

The question that White House lawyers will pose to the special counsel's office, according to the person: "You've had all these witnesses, all these records. Is there anything else you need from the White House?"

Until now, Trump's legal team has repeatedly pledged cooperation with Mueller's office. A White House spokesman said there was no plan to change the strategy.

Trump's legal team has reassured him that it sees no evidence of collusion or obstruction in the records that it turned over, White House advisers said. While the lawyers have told Trump that they expect the investigative team will continue its work related to former campaign chairman Paul Manafort deep into next year, as well as possibly Flynn, they said they believe Mueller should be close to wrapping up the focus on the current White House.

Trump himself has expressed frustration with the probe but has shown optimism that it will not touch him. He told associates recently that he harbors no deep concern over the investigation and noted that his lawyers talk with Mueller's team regularly, according to a person who spoke with Trump last week and spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

When pressed by two advisers to take the matter more seriously and asked why he is so confident in his lawyers, Trump brushed off the concerns. "He is living in his own world," the person said, predicting that Trump would erupt at some point in 2018 if the probe continued to drag on.

Another associate said that even in private, Trump is "confident, even arrogant" that he has done nothing wrong.

"There is no collusion," the president said at the White House on Sunday, after saying he was not planning to fire Mueller.

Among people familiar with the probe, there is widespread skepticism that the special counsel's investigation is drawing to a close.

Already, Manafort and his former deputy Rick Gates have been indicted on money-laundering and other charges related to work they did in Ukraine before the 2016 race. Two others have pleaded guilty and are cooperating, giving investigators new leads to pursue. Agents have gathered huge volumes of documents and conducted their first round of interviews with White House officials.

As recently as last week, Mueller's team was still asking questions about the firing of James B. Comey as FBI director,

one person said.

Legal experts said Mueller would have little incentive to clear the president or other White House aides while he is seeking more information from witnesses.

"I think it's possible Mueller's team could give them an idea of how much longer they anticipate their investigation will last," said Peter Zeidenberg, the former deputy special counsel who helped investigate the leak of Valerie Plame's covert role as a CIA operative. "I would be shocked if they have a timeline anything similar to what we've heard coming from the White House."

"As far as a clean bill of health, I can't imagine they are going to be prepared to make a decision like that at this point," he said of the special counsel's team. "They are not going to be in a position to make that call until they finish this case and finish discussing all the evidence they have."

Mark Corallo, a former spokesman for Trump's legal team, said he thinks it is unlikely that the probe wraps up by the end of the year, but he said he believes it could conclude in the spring. He said that Mueller is aware of the political implications surrounding his investigation.

"Bob understands you can't have a president who is living under this cloud of uncertainty," Corallo said, adding that he believes it is possible that the special counsel will at some point call Trump's lawyers and say, "We are done with the president. There is nothing there."

The high-stakes meeting between White House lawyers and Mueller's team comes as conservative lawmakers and pundits have intensified their demands for a second special counsel to investigate the FBI, pointing to text messages between two former FBI officials discussing their dislike of Trump.

"We are now beginning to understand the magnitude of the insider bias on Mueller's team," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) said last week. Another member of the committee, Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), said Mueller and his team should wear "Democratic Donkeys or Hillary T-shirts."

A White House adviser said the president has enjoyed the attacks. In recent weeks, he has spoken to a number of Fox News hosts, Republican lawmakers and others who have castigated Mueller's team, the adviser said.

The attacks on Mueller's investigation grew this weekend after an attorney for the presidential transition told congressional investigators Saturday that thousands of pages of the organization's communications were provided to Mueller by the federal General Services Administration.

Trump's lawyers learned Mueller had the emails this month when witnesses were quizzed on the material. Some of the documents contained sensitive information that wasn't related to the Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the material.

A GSA spokeswoman declined to comment. Mueller's team said it obtained all documents legally.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-to-get-23-of-tax-cuts-for-individuals-under-gop-bill-1513644268>

Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

By Editors, 12/19/17

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation.

That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law.

The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less.

The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

America's most-affluent households, those earning \$500,000 or more a year, which account for 1% of filers, would also get \$61 billion in cuts in the first year, according to the JCT analysis. They would get a cut of \$12 billion by 2027.

That includes income earned by pass-through businesses such as partnerships and S-corporations that pay taxes on individual returns. It doesn't include the benefits of estate-tax reductions.

Much of the rest would go to businesses in the form of corporate tax cuts, according to the JCT analysis.

The tax plan took another step toward passage Monday, when Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who had been on the fence, said she would support the bill. Mr. Trump plans to sign the bill later this week.

Trump administration officials argue the business tax cuts will help individuals, too, because it will induce companies to hire more and boost workers' wages.

"I don't think it necessarily changes my life one way or another," said Lisa Joles of Concord, Ohio, who runs the heat and air-conditioning repair shop her parents started in the 1970s. Her business brought in about \$1.5 million this past year, and she takes home about \$50,000 a year. "It could give me or someone else in the middle class that little bit of extra money that they may go out and spend, and it may boost the economy, but I almost feel like that would be a short-term effect."

The muted reaction is consistent with polls showing that the tax cuts aren't very popular. A Quinnipiac University poll released last week found that 55% of those surveyed disapprove of the tax plan, compared with 26% who support it. Republicans were the only group who supported the tax plan, with the support of 66%.

Many households are still weighing how the complicated plan will affect them. The plan recasts many features of the individual tax code—doubling a child tax credit and the standard deduction for households, while narrowing deductions for state and local taxes, mortgages and the personal exemption. That means it will play out differently for many, depending on factors such as whether they live in high-tax states, have big mortgages or have many children.

Cory Dahl, 59, a pastor who lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., said that even though a few extra hundred dollars a year won't make much difference, he is happy to get it. "Five hundred dollars is not a ton of money, but I'd rather have it in my bank account than in my tax payment," he said.

Mr. Dahl has taken the standard deduction in recent years, and he lives in a church-owned home, so he has no mortgage. He thinks raising the standard deduction will help middle-class households like his.

His niece, Katie Dahl, who lives 20 miles away in Baileys Harbor, Wis., is apprehensive. She said her biggest concern is the repeal of the Affordable Care Act requirement that individuals buy health insurance. Both Ms. Dahl, 34, and her husband, Rich Higdon, who is a musician and a potter, rely on the ACA exchange for a heavily subsidized health-insurance plan. They pay \$12 a month for a silver-level plan that covers both of them. With an income of about \$41,000 a year, Ms. Dahl says the ACA has made them both confident that they could survive as self-employed artists.

"I'm worried what the mandate will do to premiums, and if it will go so far as to start the unraveling of Obamacare, which has been a big boon to us financially," she said.

While the middle class as a whole will see benefits, some people will end up worse off. Using an alternative measure of household income, the Tax Policy Center found that of those households in the very middle of the income distribution, making \$48,600 to \$86,100 a year, 91.3% would receive a tax cut next year. But 7.3% would receive a tax increase. By 2025, 10.9% would receive a tax increase.

Many taxpayers are worried that they will fall into that latter group. Jon Rose, 45, who runs a car-detailing shop in Carlisle, Pa., could see a cut from his current top tax rate of 25% because he runs an S corporation, a pass-through business that is eligible for a 20% deduction from business income if it meets certain conditions. His accountant told him he would likely save about \$3,000 as a result of tax changes. The problem, he said, is that his accountant also said he has about \$16,000 worth of personal exemptions that he would no longer be able to claim.

Congress has raised the child-tax credit to \$2,000 a child, but he was even dubious about how much that would help him. "I only have two kids, it's not like I have 16," said Mr. Rose, whose wife is a high-school teacher. "It doesn't sound great."

He said that if he somehow ends up saving an extra \$500 or even \$1,000, that wouldn't mean too much to him. "I wouldn't even notice," he said. "It wouldn't make any difference, especially if it's just coming out gradually over time. If it's \$1,000, it's \$40 a paycheck. That's dinner."

Corrections & Amplifications

An earlier version of this article incorrectly reported that middle-income households would receive \$144 billion in total tax cuts over a decade under the Republican tax plan, or 10% of the total net tax cut. It also incorrectly reported that affluent households making more than \$500,000 would receive \$171 billion in total tax cuts over a decade. Those calculations were based on an incorrect reading of tables released Monday by the Joint Committee on Taxation. The article also incorrectly reported that households making \$500,000 or more comprise 6% of total filers. They comprise 1% of total filers.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

DOW RISES 5000 POINTS ON THE YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER - MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

6.1K 8.2K 36K



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · 2h



Stocks and the economy have a long way to go after the Tax Cut Bill is totally understood and appreciated in scope and size. Immediate expensing will have a big impact. Biggest Tax Cuts and Reform EVER passed. Enjoy, and create many beautiful JOBS!



5.8K



5.2K



24K



To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Wed 2/7/2018 11:05:17 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Not another shutdown showdown — Tax extenders in play? — Breaking down the nuclear waste stalemate

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 02/07/2018 06:01 AM EDT

With help from Annie Snider, Alex Guillén, Emily Holden, Eric Wolff, Darius Dixon and Anthony Adragna

WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE: Following the House's 245-182 vote on Tuesday for a stopgap bill [H.R. 1892 \(115\)](#), the Senate will now take up the measure to keep the government open through March 23. The Senate is expected to remove the provisions providing defense spending through the end of fiscal 2019 that were included by the House GOP. And, although no final agreement has been reached, Senate lawmakers are close to a broader budget deal, POLITICO's John Bresnahan, Jennifer Scholtes and Sarah Ferris [report](#).

Not mincing words: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) said the "stupid" strategy of running the government by short-term spending patches would continue until the Senate does away with the filibuster. "The only reason you hang onto the filibuster is it gives you this sense of omnipotence," he said. "There's no rational reason why there should be a filibuster and certainly not the way they're running it over there. If they really want to filibuster, they're old people. Make them get on the floor and talk. They can't handle it."

EXTENDERS IN PLAY: House Ways and Means Republicans are planning to hold hearings examining the future of tax extenders this year, the committee's chairman said Tuesday. And, Pro's Aaron Lorenzo reports, while discussions are still ongoing, senators are considering adding a host of extenders to their stopgap spending bill. "Yes, we are having those conversations with [Senate Finance] Chairman [\[Orrin\] Hatch](#) and the Finance Committee as well on those issues," Ways and Means Chairman [Kevin Brady](#) (R-Texas) said. "No agreement has been reached yet, and no guarantee that will be included in a final product. But we've continued those conversations since tax reform concluded." Read the story [here](#).

IT'S WEDNESDAY. I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and NRDC's Ed Chen was quickest to identify former Rep. Al Gore as the first House member to speak before the cameras when live-televvised proceedings occurred for the first time in March 1979. Now for something completely different: What are the three countries that are completely landlocked by one other country? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER? Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#), the top Energy appropriator, told reporters he's confident he and ranking member [Dianne Feinstein](#) can "quickly" reach agreement on a spending bill "as soon as" there's agreement about how much money they'll have in their coffers. Oh, and the administration's [reported plans](#) to seek a 72 percent reduction to DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy aren't going anywhere in his subcommittee either: "While we respect any president's budget, Congress decides what to do about

appropriations under the constitution," he said. And his House counterpart, Mike Simpson, also views that proposal as a non-starter. "We take their recommendations, look at why they're proposing certain things and then we ultimately make the decision," Simpson said.

QUOTED: Simpson, asked why he wants the House Appropriations chairmanship amid congressional budgetary dysfunction, quipped to ME: "Cause I'd be good at it."

NEI CHIEF: NUCLEAR WASTE STALEMATE IS DOING 'REPUTATIONAL'

DAMAGE: The long feud over disposing of the country's commercial nuclear waste is doing real damage to the industry, Nuclear Energy Institute CEO Maria Korsnick told lawmakers Tuesday afternoon, something the industry has admitted privately but often sought to characterize as a political and congressional problem. "It's not only a cost in operation, it's a reputational cost quite frankly to the industry at-large," she said at a House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing, noting that the waste issue is one of the top reasons people question the viability of nuclear power. "To try to counter that with, 'Well, no, it's not technically difficult. No, there's a very technically feasible solution. We've just chosen in fact not to adopt it,' [hasn't helped]. It has actually put an albatross around the neck of the nuclear industry to go forward with viable public support."

William Ostendorff, a former nuclear regulator, said the slate of reactor shutdowns in recent years has also discouraged young engineers from considering careers in the industry. "The signals are there. There's no ambiguity about the current status of the nuclear industry," he said at the same hearing.

The American Petroleum Institute pushed back against NEI's testimony that raised the issue of grid reliability if the nuclear fleet shrinks. "Creating false narratives about unfounded reliability concerns and advocating for subsidies that benefit one fuel type over another only hurt efforts to improve the reliability and resilience of the electric grid," Todd Snitchler, API's market development group director, said in a statement.

DEPARTMENT OF UNSOLICITED ADVICE: ME doubts the Trump White House much cares who Senate EPW ranking member Tom Carper would select to run the Council on Environmental Quality in place of Kathleen Hartnett White, but he offered up an idea: One of the state environmental chiefs under a Republican governor. "You've got a great pool of over 30 states with Republican governors. Use that hiring pool," he told reporters. Asked if he was concerned the CEQ slot may remain vacant for a while, Carper scoffed: "Compared to Kathleen Hartnett White, a vacancy for a while is a great victory not for either political side but I think for our country."

CARPER: WHAT'S THE GRANT PROCESS? Carper sent a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Tuesday on his agency's process for grant approval and grant awards in 2017. "A recent analysis of EPA's publicly available grants data undertaken by my staff ... demonstrates that at least 49 out of 50 states saw declines in reported EPA funding in 2017 as compared to a similar period in 2016," Carper writes. The senator also called into question the amount EPA awarded in the first three quarters of 2017, claiming the \$1.1 billion awarded was just one third of the \$3.5 billion awarded over the same period in 2016. See the letter here.

EPA called Carper's letter "unfortunate" and noted that although the agency is "continuing to analyze the information on grant funding Senator Carper provided ... it appears the data that the Senator is reviewing is from an outdated source," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said in a statement, citing the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act that Carper authored. "As a result of this data migration information contained on www.usaspending.gov regarding the amount of funding EPA awarded between January 20, 2017, and September 30, 2017, is incomplete. In fact, all EPA grants data for the period through September 30, 2017, has been posted timely and in accordance with the Data Act, and 99.84 percent of all grant actions requested by the program offices have been obligated or awarded."

WOTUS LAWSUITS PILE UP: The Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Wildlife Federation — two of the biggest backers of the Obama administration's Waters of the U.S. rule — filed a challenge to the Trump administration's move to delay the 2015 rule in the Southern District of New York Tuesday. Also filing challenges Tuesday were the Southern Environmental Law Center in South Carolina District Court, Charleston Division, and 11 Democratic Attorneys General, also in the Southern District of New York.

DEMOCRATS WARN PRUITT OF HEALTH RISK: In an effort to put pressure on Pruitt as he seeks to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, House Democrats are pointing to possible negative health effects from the type of replacement rule the agency is considering. Leaders of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition are collecting signatures on a letter outlining how requiring efficiency upgrades at coal plants — rather than encouraging a shift away from coal-fired power — could cause more premature deaths than doing nothing at all. Democratic aides on the Hill on Tuesday were briefed by researchers from Harvard University and Syracuse University who worked on a 2014 study that showed a so-called "inside the fence line" rule might cut carbon levels only slightly while increasing some other pollutants. Plants might run more if they're more efficient, offsetting some emissions improvements.

WESTERN RIVERS AREN'T SO WILD AND FREE: Roughly half of Western rivers have been altered by dams, abandoned mines, irrigation, pollution or other factors, according to a Center for American Progress report coming out today. Some states have no truly natural rivers left, the report finds, arguing that 99 percent of major rivers in Utah are altered. "From the iconic Colorado River to the roaring Rio Grande, most of our majestic waterways are no longer continuous or natural," the report states. New Mexico Democratic Sen. Tom Udall joins the report's authors for a press call this afternoon.

WHEELER APPEARS TODAY: Andrew Wheeler, EPA's nominee for deputy administrator, will appear once again before the Senate EPW committee this morning, where he's likely to get drilled by Democrats — but they won't have the votes to block him. Following the vote, the committee will hold a hearing on environmental regulations and their impact on farming and ranching communities. **If you go:** The meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. in 406 Dirksen. Watch it here.

Two of the senators voting on Wheeler today received checks from him last year before he was formally nominated in October, according to Federal Election Commission records. Wheeler gave \$500 to panel Chairman John Barrasso's reelection campaign last June, and another \$500 to

Sen. [Jim Inhofe](#)'s leadership PAC, Fund for a Conservative Future, in May. Wheeler also gave \$1,500 to Sen. [Cory Gardner](#)'s leadership PAC, Project West, in March. Those follow Wheeler's \$1,000 donation in 2016 to Trump Victory, a joint fundraising committee that split contributions between the president's campaign, the RNC and various GOP state parties.

WAIT AND SEE: Barrasso declined to answer whether he expected the administration's forthcoming infrastructure principles would include pay-fors, but he does not want the plan to include a gas tax hike, which House Transportation Chairman [Bill Shuster](#) floated last week. "We just passed a massive tax relief for the American people. I think it would be the wrong time now to put on a tax after you just provided tax relief that people needed," Barrasso said.

UPBEAT ON FLORIDA DRILLING MORATORIUM: Rep. Bishop told ME Tuesday that staff met about possible solutions to an expiring ban on offshore drilling in eastern Gulf of Mexico that could include tacking language onto his energy package, [H.R. 4239 \(115\)](#), and he's upbeat about figuring out a solution. "It can be worked out, I think, in a way that satisfies everyone in the Gulf area and would be good precedent for the rest of the nation, so I don't see this as a major problem," he said. The current eastern Gulf moratorium runs through June 30, 2022.

ATTRACTIONS YET TO COME: Senate Energy Chairman [Lisa Murkowski](#) told reporters she's "hoping" to get Energy Secretary Rick Perry — along with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and representatives from the Forest Service — before her committee for budgetary oversight hearings in the near future, but added there's no date set yet.

PARIS AGREEMENT FOCUS OF FOIA SUIT: The Competitive Enterprise Institute will file a lawsuit today against the State Department, following four FOIA requests related to the Paris climate agreement that have not been acted upon. CEI is seeking documents related to State's use of so-called validators, or outside individuals and groups used to promote the Paris climate accord under the Obama administration, as well as the department's use of encrypted instant messaging service during the November 2017 Bonn conference. Read the complaint [here](#).

GLOOMY FORECAST FOR SOLAR IN 2018: The solar industry shed 4 percent of its jobs in 2017, and 2018 is looking worse, thanks to the new tariff on panel and cell imports imposed by the Trump administration. The Solar Foundation's annual National Solar Job Census, [released](#) today, said installations would fall to 10.1 gigawatts, down 16 percent from 2017, which itself was off from the record year the industry enjoyed in 2016. The biggest job losses last year came in states where the industry was best established, like California and Massachusetts, but the Solar Energy Industries Association has said tariffs could create the most problems in new southern markets.

FROM THE HOOSIER STATE: A new report from Advanced Energy Economy found employing three demand reduction strategies in Indiana would save state businesses and households more than \$2.3 billion over the next 10 years. Read it [here](#).

MAIL CALL — Six governors will send [this letter](#) to Congress and the president today, calling for action on carbon capture policy including the Section 45Q Tax Credit for Carbon Dioxide

Sequestration.

— **Virginia Rep. Donald McEachin** led a letter with 49 other lawmakers urging Pruitt to clarify his stance on EPA's endangerment finding following his statements before the Senate EPW Committee last week. Read [the letter](#).

QUICK HITS

— The Nunes memo made this congressman a national name. But his California district cares about water, not Russia, [Los Angeles Times](#).

— Pruitt goes one-on-one with News 3, [Las Vegas News 3](#).

— Floods are getting worse, and 2,500 chemical sites lie in the water's path, [The New York Times](#).

— Efforts to move top U.S. land managers west gain a strong ally, [The Washington Post](#).

— The development deal that led to Pruitt adviser's banking ban, [E&E News](#).

— How VW paid \$25 billion for Dieselgate — and got off easy, [ProPublica](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — The Texas Water Conservation Association holds [14th annual Texas Water Day](#), 400 New Jersey Avenue NW

9:30 a.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works Committee [markup](#) to vote on the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to be deputy EPA administrator, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[The Impact of Federal Environmental Regulations and Policies on American Farming and Ranching Communities](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee [hearing](#) on various bills, 366 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — Woodrow Wilson Center [discussion](#) with Yuri Shafranik on the energy environment between the U.S. and Russia, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Fifth Floor

12:00 p.m. — The Women's Council on Energy and the Environment hosts a "[lunch and learn](#)," 1055 Thomas Jefferson St NW

12:30 p.m. — The Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies [seminar](#) on China's Environmental Policy, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW

2:00 p.m. — Resources for the Future holds a [webinar](#) on "Understanding Induced Earthquake Activity in Oklahoma."

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/02/not-another-shutdown-showdown-095473>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

House GOP passes stopgap bill to avoid shutdown [Back](#)

By John Bresnahan, Jennifer Scholtes and Sarah Ferris | 02/06/2018 11:21 AM EDT

The House passed a stopgap bill Tuesday to prevent another government shutdown, as a broader budget deal appeared increasingly within reach on Capitol Hill.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer met privately on Tuesday to discuss lifting stiff spending caps as part of the short-term funding package, according to sources in both parties briefed on the talks. The top four congressional leaders believe they are close to clinching a budget deal that significantly boosts defense and domestic spending and ends the cycle of temporary funding measures.

The bill passed by the House, 245-182, would boost Pentagon spending over the next eight months while funding nondefense programs at current levels — and then only until March 23.

The "defense-only" approach was an easy win in the House, where droves of GOP conservatives and defense hawks have been begging Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and his leadership team for months to vote on just such a plan.

But many of those same House Republicans acknowledged the bill is doomed in the Senate, since Democrats want any increases in defense and nondefense spending levels to be equal.

"From the very beginning of the budget debate, Democrats have made our position in these negotiations very clear," Schumer said on the Senate floor Tuesday. "We support an increase in funding for our military and our middle class. The two are not mutually exclusive. We don't want to do just one and leave the other behind."

The Senate is likely to rewrite the House bill to eliminate the extra defense funding, but a repeat of last month's federal government shutdown is not expected.

White House chief of staff John Kelly told reporters on Tuesday he didn't think there would be another government shutdown.

"I don't know. I don't think it's going to happen, no. Yeah, I guess I'm optimistic," Kelly said.

President Donald Trump, meanwhile, called for a government shutdown Tuesday if Congress is unable to pass what he considers adequate border-security measures.

"If we don't get rid of these loopholes where killers are allowed to come into our country and continue to kill ... if we don't change it, let's have a shutdown," Trump said at a White House roundtable focused on the gang MS-13. "We'll do a shutdown, and it's worth it for our country. I'd love to see a shutdown if we don't get this stuff taken care of."

Immigration, however, is not a major issue in the current spending debate on Capitol Hill.

And a budget caps deal could ease all the drama surrounding the Senate vote, as all four congressional leaders and the White House would have to be in agreement for such a spending deal to occur. It would outline budget levels for the next two years, although there will still be fights over specific policy concerns within the annual appropriations bills.

The deal is expected to bust budget caps by \$300 billion for domestic and defense programs over the next two years. It would also achieve near parity between defense and domestic funding increases — a key priority of Democrats — and approach \$150 billion in new defense spending to satisfy hawks, according to a person briefed on the talks.

Leaving a House GOP strategy meeting Tuesday morning, Rep. Mark Amodei (R-Nev.) said lawmakers are prepared for the bill to "ping-pong" back to the House with changes from the Senate. And if the Senate strips out the extra defense money, House Republicans will be forced to embrace that rewrite or risk another shutdown come midnight Thursday.

"The history's pretty clear. If they need to send something back, we usually hug it pretty quick," said Amodei, a member of the House spending panel. "Let's not bulls— each other. The Republicans in the House may be in the majority, but it's like — when we talk about what the heck hits the president's desk — it doesn't feel like we're in control."

The House Freedom Caucus voted Monday night to band together in support of House GOP leadership's spending plan. But the conservative group's chief, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), said "the majority" of his caucus plans to oppose the measure if it returns without defense funding at a level of \$659.2 billion.

Meadows said the group doesn't plan to take an official position against a stripped-down version, though, potentially enabling House leaders to pick off a few of those conservative lawmakers as "yea" votes if the measure does indeed return with changes from the Senate.

"I think there's a fair amount of skepticism in terms of: 'Ultimately, will this produce a different result?'" Meadows said. "But it's the best play call we have today."

The Senate likely won't hold its passage vote until Wednesday or Thursday; another House vote would come shortly after.

House Democrats plan to head to their annual strategy retreat Wednesday and will likely be called back to Washington for a final vote to prevent a shutdown.

Making the plan harder for Democrats to oppose, the GOP bill includes two years of funding for the Community Health Centers program, a permanent repeal of the Medicare cap on therapy services and other provisions that generally have bipartisan support.

Yet Senate Democrats continue to make clear they have no interest in the House GOP plan.

"We've made very clear that to get past sequester, you've got to raise the caps on both," said Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee. "We're for an increase in defense. But we're not going to ignore everything from opioids to veterans hospitals to education to cancer research and all those things."

Burgess Everett and Seung Min Kim contributed to this report.

To view online [click here](#).

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Extenders in play for spending bill, but Brady wants more vetting in the future [Back](#)

By Aaron Lorenzo | 02/06/2018 04:28 PM EDT

House Ways and Means Republicans plan to hold hearings examining the future of extenders this year, though discussions to revive a host of expired tax provisions are ongoing, the committee's chairman said Tuesday.

Lawmakers in the Senate are considering adding extenders to a stopgap spending bill to continue federal funding beyond Thursday.

"Yes, we are having those conversations with [Senate Finance] Chairman [\[Orrin\] Hatch](#) and the Finance Committee as well on those issues," Ways and Means Chairman [Kevin Brady](#) (R-Texas) said. "No agreement has been reached yet, and no guarantee that will be included in a final product. But we've continued those conversations since tax reform concluded."

But Brady is no fan of temporary tax policy, he said, adding that the need for extenders deserves examination going forward. Their beneficiaries should defend their utility now that tax rates were reduced in major tax legislation, [H.R. 1 \(115\)](#), at the end of last year, said Rep. [Vern Buchanan](#) (R-Fla.), who heads the Ways and Means Tax Policy Subcommittee.

It could make sense to maintain some of the tax breaks while scuttling others, but they all deserve a hard look, Buchanan said. The plan was discussed during a retreat Ways and Means Republicans held earlier on Tuesday.

Hatch has introduced legislation, [S. 2256 \(115\)](#), to revive about three dozen expired tax benefits.

"Each of those provisions has an industry that's tied strongly to it, as well as members of Congress who advocate for it," Brady said. "So that's why I think having, as Vern said, 'a good, thorough review' of how those fit in in a post-tax reform world is the right way to go about it, and Chairman Hatch agrees."

Senate Finance staff from both parties have been meeting with leadership aides on extenders. The expired provisions have "got to be" part of either a continuing resolution or omnibus spending legislation, said Sen. [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa), a senior member of the Finance panel.

While extenders have their champions, they also have their detractors, including the conservative billionaire Koch brothers. Groups the wealthy industrialists fund are pushing lawmakers to resist what they call corporate welfare.

"The entire point of tax reform was to get rid of ridiculous carve-outs and subsidies that only benefit the industry that's lobbying for them," said a statement from Freedom Partners Executive Vice President Nathan Nascimento. "The last thing Congress should do is undermine this historic step forward by reviving billions of dollars in corporate welfare so special interests can continue to profit off of taxpayers. We urge lawmakers to remain focused on funding the government and protecting taxpayers — not padding the pockets of Washington lobbyists."

To view online [click here](#).

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Shuster mentions gas tax at Republican retreat [Back](#)

By Brianna Gurciullo | 02/01/2018 12:54 PM EDT

Rep. [Bill Shuster](#) said he brought up raising the gas tax today at an infrastructure-focused session during the Republican retreat in West Virginia.

"It was fitting I think for me to talk about the elephant in the room at a GOP conference and that's dealing with the Highway Trust Fund," Shuster (R-Pa.) [told reporters](#) after a session with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, Sen. [John Barrasso](#) (R-Wyo.) and Sen. [John Thune](#) (R-S.D.).

"That is a user fee, it's a fee you pay at the pump and it's something that's efficient, it's understandable and it's a fee, it's a tax you collect that goes 100 percent to its intended purpose — and that's the highway system, the transit system in this country," Shuster said at a speaking event following the session.

Shuster added that he believes an infrastructure package must be both bipartisan and "fiscally

responsible."

"It has to be bipartisan to get it through the Senate," Shuster said. "And if we want to attract Democrats in the House, we probably lose some Republican votes."

Permit streamlining also came up at the session with Trump administration officials and GOP lawmakers, Shuster said.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

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Yes, very	Somewhat	Neutral	Not really	Not at all

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 12/14/2017 9:18:59 PM
Subject: FW: Request for comment on Definers contract, deadline end of day

Nancy

Can you respond to her please? Thank you.

From: Rebecca Leber [mailto:rlieber@motherjones.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 3:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Request for comment on Definers contract, deadline end of day

Writing to request comment on federal records showing that the EPA has hired Definers Corp., a PR firm associated with GOP campaigns, on a \$120,000 federal contract to conduct media monitoring.

What work was Definers hired for?

Can you comment on Jahan Wilcox's connections to the staff at Definers, and if he or any other staff played a role in facilitating the contract?

My deadline is end of the day, thank you

Rebecca Leber

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Tue 9/26/2017 2:45:26 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017**

In the morning, President Donald J. Trump will receive his daily intelligence briefing. The President will then meet with bipartisan representation from the House Committee on Ways and Means. Later in the morning, the President will receive a briefing on hurricane recovery efforts. In the afternoon, the President will meet with President Mariano Rajoy of Spain, and, after a working luncheon with him, the two leaders will hold a joint press conference. The President will then depart the White House for Joint Base Andrews, en route to New York, NY. In New York, the President will participate in a U.S. Mission greeting. The President will then meet with the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee (RNC). In the evening, the President will participate in a roundtable with RNC supporters. The President will then give remarks at the RNC finance dinner. Later in the evening, the President will depart New York, NY for Washington, D.C., en route to the White House.

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: ABC

Print: The Hill

Radio: AURN

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: ABC

Print: Washington Post

Radio: NY Times

EDT

9:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

10:00AM THE PRESIDENT receives his daily intelligence briefing

Oval Office

Closed Press

**10:30AM THE PRESIDENT meets with bipartisan members of the
House Committee on Ways and Means**

Roosevelt Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 10:20AM – Briefing Room Doors)

11:30AM **THE PRESIDENT** receives a briefing on hurricane recovery
efforts

White House Situation Room

Closed Press

12:15PM **THE PRESIDENT** welcomes President Mariano Rajoy of
Spain

Stakeout

Open Press

12:20PM **THE PRESIDENT** meets with President Rajoy

Oval Office

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 12:10PM – Briefing Room Doors)

12:35PM **THE PRESIDENT has a working luncheon with President**
Rajoy

Cabinet Room

Closed Press

1:15PM **Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time**

Joint Base Andrews

Virginia Gate

1:45PM **THE PRESIDENT holds a joint press conference with President**
Rajoy

Rose Garden

Pre-Credentialed Media

2:45PM **THE PRESIDENT** departs the White House en route to
Joint Base Andrews

South Lawn

Open Press

3:05PM **THE PRESIDENT** departs Washington, D.C. en route to
New York, NY

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:00PM **THE PRESIDENT** arrives in New York, NY

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

**4:10PM THE PRESIDENT departs John F. Kennedy International
Airport en route to Wall Street Landing Zone**

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:30PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the Wall Street Landing Zone

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

5:00PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a U.S. Mission greeting

United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Closed Press

**6:10PM THE PRESIDENT meets with the Chairwoman of the
Republican National Committee (RNC)**

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

**6:25PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a roundtable with RNC
supporters**

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

7:35PM THE PRESIDENT gives remarks at the RNC finance dinner

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

8:45PM **THE PRESIDENT** departs Wall Street Landing Zone en route to John F. Kennedy International Airport

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

9:15PM **THE PRESIDENT** departs New York, NY en route to Washington, D.C.

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:10PM **THE PRESIDENT** arrives in Washington, D.C.

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:30PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Lawn

Open Press

###

[Unsubscribe](#)

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Mark Tapscott
Sent: Wed 5/17/2017 5:50:57 PM
Subject: Re: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

And I just ran across the fact you were an RNC spokesman a few years ago. I spent two years there as communications/publications director 81-82.

_Sent with Mailtrack

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 1:48 PM, Mark Tapscott <mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Norm Coleman, I always thought he was an interesting guy. Did you know Matt Wolking with Rubio?

Thanks very much for the interview offer, I would very much like for that to happen. In the meantime, I'd like to sit down with you over a cup of coffee and hear more about your role.

I was a non-career SESer at OPM during Reagan's first term working for a Director (Donald Devine) who was a lightning rod like Pruitt. Believe me, I can appreciate the challenges you guys face.

_Sent with Mailtrack

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 1:42 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

That is awesome and we will work to get you in again – right now it's just a logistical thing, but will put it on our list.

I'm actually from Minnesota. Came out with Norm Coleman and recently worked on Rubio's presidential campaign and part of Joni's campaign in '14.

From: Mark Tapscott [mailto:mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

Thanks, Jahan. Are you, like your boss, an Okie? I was born and raised in Moore, graduated from OSU. I interviewed Mr. Pruitt when he AG and I was at the Washington Examiner.

_Sent with Mailtrack

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 12:21 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

Mark –

Thank you very much, this is very helpful. Also I have really enjoyed working with Andrew and everyone at the Daily Caller. If there is anything we can do, please let me know and again thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Mark Tapscott [<mailto:mark@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 12:17 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: I saw Administrator Pruitt's Fox interview this morning on Superfund

I watched his conversation this morning on Fox and

was elated to hear of the Superfund reforms he's implementing, especially because those reforms address problems we've reported on a great deal in recent months.

Here's just a small selection of links to some of our stories:

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/04/12/feds-leave-dangerously-polluted-superfund-sites-uncleaned-for-decades/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/12/18/epa-let-pollution-fester-at-302-sites-for-years-sometimes-decades/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/02/09/feds-ignored-contamination-for-decades-in-poor-neighborhood-superfund-site/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/05/22/epa-conducts-two-secret-meetings-a-year-to-decide-how-to-dole-out-billions-in-slush-fund-money/>

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Mark Tapscott

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Proud member, First Amendment Center's National Freedom of Information Act Hall of Fame, Class of 2006

Corruption in government is a bipartisan problem. Exposing it is a trans-partisan obligation.

Ask me what happened at 9:15 am on the morning of March 1, 1991.

_Sent with Mailtrack

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Ask me what happened at 9:15 am on the morning of March 1, 1991.

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Flynn, Mike[Flynn.Mike@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 2:17:21 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

Thank you.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 10:16 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Flynn, Mike <Flynn.Mike@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

I'll contact our budget team and get the contract process started today. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 10:12 AM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

George, that is fine to open up the competitive bidding process, but that needs to happen TODAY. This has been dragging on for weeks and weeks, and we don't need this to take any longer.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 9:13 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Definers

Jahan,

I spoke with our budget team yesterday. Because this would be a \$ 120,000 contract, we cannot move forward without going through a competitive bidding process. In addition, this cost is more than OPA's budget. In the past, we have solicited funds from the program offices to reduce the portion covered by OPA. Other offices have contributed in exchange

for receiving the clips once a day.

I can start the process of soliciting funds and competing the contract. If you and Liz want me to proceed, I'll get a time estimate from our budget team.

Our contact at Definers has still not returned my request for a demo. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2017, at 8:50 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

George –

I don't care how this happens but we need to make this happen as quickly as possible.

I'm trying to get a clip from an MSNBC show that is time sensitive and can't grab it because it's not online yet. We miss a lot of clips that happen overnight or on the weekends and we need a solution to fix this.

Thank you.

Jahan

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

That makes sense. I'm asking Joe to give me a demo. I would do it on Thursday, but I have to take the day off for a family matter. If you would like to be part of the demo, I could find another day. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

Thanks man! I am out on Friday but the rapid response clips are helpful and the interns doing a great job but we miss stuff late at night.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

I'm trying to get a time set up with him on Friday. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:52 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Where are we on setting up a call with Joe. I really don't need to do a call, I know the quality of their product. Last night a story about in the NYT and would've been nice to have someone at the helm to send that out as it happened.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 3:38:55 PM
Subject: Re: Media Clips Service Contract

Thanks, Jahan. I'll incorporate your edits and give Mr. Pounder a call to clarify. - George

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 10, 2017, at 11:27 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

I would update this to 8:00 AM EDT and then an afternoon matrix that is sent out by 4:00 PM EDT.

Additionally, in terms of sending this to 600 people, we might want to work with Mr. Pounder on clarifying what can and cannot be done to prevent anything from going into a SPAM filter or being shutdown. My suggestion would be daily, real-time alerts to roughly 100 people and then a matrix that would go to top people in each regional office and their press teams who can further distribute the information.

The contractor shall deliver the daily compendium by 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time. This briefing will go to a listserv maintained by the contractor of approximately 600 people. This daily compendium will include media coverage from the preceding 24 hour period, except in the case of the daily compendium for Monday mornings, which will also capture media coverage from the weekend. Alerts on breaking news will be delivered throughout the day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Media Clips Service Contract

Hi Jahan,

Circling back to see if you have any comments, before we move forward on this. Thanks,

George

From: Hull, George
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2017 6:40 PM
To: Nancy Grantham (grantham.nancy@epa.gov) <grantham.nancy@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Media Clips Service Contract

Nancy and Jahan,

Please find attached the draft "Statement of Work" for the Definers contract that we are developing. The Statement of Work is the section of the contract that lays out the details of what we expect the company to provide, parameters on delivery, timing, etc. I believe this language to be consistent with our conversations on the services we are seeking, but thought it was important that you review and have a chance to discuss or suggest changes. If you could get back to me on Monday morning, I can get any changes incorporated into the contract and continue forward. Thanks, George

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Bodine, Susan[bodine.susan@epa.gov]
Cc: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Thur 12/14/2017 8:44:39 PM
Subject: FW: Request for comment on Definers contract, deadline end of day

I know exactly where this leak came from.

From: Rebecca Leber [mailto:releber@motherjones.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 3:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Request for comment on Definers contract, deadline end of day

Writing to request comment on federal records showing that the EPA has hired Definers Corp., a PR firm associated with GOP campaigns, on a \$120,000 federal contract to conduct media monitoring.

What work was Definers hired for?

Can you comment on Jahan Wilcox's connections to the staff at Definers, and if he or any other staff played a role in facilitating the contract?

My deadline is end of the day, thank you

Rebecca Leber

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Ford, Hayley[ford.hayley@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 2:02:54 PM
Subject: EPA News Highlights 12.19.17
EPA News Highlights 12.19.17.docx

EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

The Weekly Standard: There's No Scandal at the EPA

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich. Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

Chicago Tribune: EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood. The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site. The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump. "E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.) Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt. But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump

Bloomberg: Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp. The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals. "It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Reuters: EPA seeks comment on carbon rule replacement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday issued a notice that it wants public input for a possible replacement of Obama-era regulations on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants that the agency is repealing. The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release. The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. "The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

The Hill: EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices. The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a “sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices” in Administrator Scott Pruitt’s office at the agency’s Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show. The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt’s arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs. Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head. He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

National News Highlights 12.19.17

Reuters: US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump. The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote. The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said. With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain. Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The Washington Post: Trump team’s meeting with Mueller’s office poised to ratchet up tensions

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation’s focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared. But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump. People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials.

The Wall Street Journal: Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation. That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law. The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less. The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Weekly Standard

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Designers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the Times in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt’s team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an “authoritarian” regime wanted to “hunt down ideological subversives,” it wouldn’t use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The Times is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that “transparency matters a lot to me” might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often “transparency” only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

The Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-east-chicago-epa-orders-st-1219-20171218-story.html>

EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

By Craig Lyons, 12/18/17

he U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East

Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood.

The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site.

The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

"We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement.

The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.

The new agreements come almost a week after the EPA said the costs to remove contaminated soil from two neighborhoods on the Superfund site could quadruple from what was initially estimated.

The EPA said the cost anticipated for the two residential zones of the Calumet neighborhood are expected to increase from the estimated \$22.8 million to an estimated \$84.9 million.

The EPA said it based the initial cost estimate on sampling done at 7 percent of the homes in those two residential areas, according to documents, but now that testing has been done at 90 percent of the properties, the data showed more the remediate would require more resources.

The EPA's remediation plan for zones 2 and 3 includes excavation of contaminated soil to a maximum depth of 24 inches; disposal of the contaminated material; and restoring the yards once new soil is filled in, according to EPA documents.

The U.S.S. Lead Superfund site is one of 21 that Pruitt put on a list of sites in need of immediate and intense attention. Pruitt visited East Chicago in April and it was the first Superfund site he had went to after taking office.

Pruitt last week put the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site on a list of 21 sites across the county in need of immediate and intense attention, according to a press release.

"Getting toxic land sites cleaned up and revitalized is of the utmost importance to the communities across the country that are affected by these sites," Pruitt said, in a statement. "I have charged the Superfund Task Force to immediately and intently develop plans for each of these sites to ensure they are thoughtfully addressed with urgency."

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/blog/epa-bureaucrats-complain-pruitt-doesnt-want-conspire-trump/>

EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

By Elizabeth Harrington, 12/19/17

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump.

"E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.)

Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt.

But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump:

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an 'environmental catastrophe.' Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

Another take: people notice when employees publicly criticize their boss. And if it's in politics, Republican operatives might want to know if employees are actively working to sabotage a Republican administration.

The Times doesn't mention that the bureaucrats—Elizabeth Southerland, Michael Cox, and Gary Morton—all either leaked to liberal news outlets to criticize Pruitt and Trump, or attended "resistance" rallies.

Allan Blutstein, the lawyer who is vice president of FOIA Operations at the Republican group America Rising, told the Times that he submitted the requests for "employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt."

"He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had

violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work," the Times wrote.

"Compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work." Read another way: Republicans want to see if these career bureaucrats who hate Pruitt are working to sabotage the administration.

I wonder why Republicans would worry about that?

"Washington Bureaucrats Are Quietly Working to Undermine Trump's Agenda," Bloomberg reported Monday, just a day after the Times defense of the three resistance bureaucrats at the EPA.

Bloomberg writes, "Some of the roughly two million career staff have found ways to obstruct, slow down, or simply ignore their new leader, the president."

The article even prints one career bureaucrat's "checklist" for resistance. Joel Clement, a former bureaucrat in the Department of Interior, says others should start "leaking documents," and "slowing down the implementation of the policy," after first trying a "legitimate approach before you obstruct," of course.

The Times says now bureaucrats are living under a "wave of fear," and that they could get in trouble for tweeting "critical comments" against EPA management. (Maybe don't bad mouth your boss on social media.)

But the employees the Times highlighted don't have much to worry about.

Southerland and Cox took early retirement. Both went to a liberal Washington Post columnist Joe Davidson to publicize their dissatisfaction when they were on their way out the door.

Cox leaked his anti-Trump letter in April, which the Post ran under the headline, "EPA staffer leaves with a bang, blasting agency policies under Trump."

In his letter, Cox said he was "frankly insulted" that President Trump would visit the EPA, and that Trump did so to "give us the finger." He called the Trump administration "arrogant and callous," and accused Pruitt of having "not done your homework" on the Paris climate deal."

"Fortunately," Cox wrote, "there are other global leaders, including China and India, who understand the urgency of the problem and are taking action."

Blutstein filed a FOIA request on Cox a few days after Cox went to the Washington Post.

In August, Southerland leaked her complaints against the Trump administration to the Post, claiming she was retiring in protest. She claimed EPA wouldn't be able to do the "right thing" under Trump. A FOIA request was filed the next day.

It turns out Southerland was not retiring in protest of Trump, but said in emails that she "needed to retire to help out with family medical care."

As for Morton, he's the head of an EPA government union who has said, "The EPA as we know it might not exist any more" because of Trump.

"His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts," the Times reported.

The Times fails to mention it was a "resistance" rally, organized by Morton's union the American Federation of Government Employees.

"This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Morton now says.

I'd call it a "resistance hunt." And it's not that difficult when you do it out in the open.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-18/pruitt-s-epa-turns-to-lean-manufacturing-to-speed-up-reviews>

Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

By Eric Rosen and John Lippert, 12/18/17

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp.

The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals.

"It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Before joining the EPA, Darwin had a 20-year career in Arizona where he served as director of the Department of Environmental Quality and then as chief of operations. He led development of the state's management strategy for Governor Doug Ducey before leaving at the end of June.

Still, overhauling how the agency works may face difficulties at the EPA where many members

of the 15,000 workforce have bristled under the leadership of Trump and Administrator Scott Pruitt. This year EPA ranked 22nd out of 23 mid-size federal agencies in how its employees rate the effectiveness of its senior leaders, according to a survey by the Partnership for Public Service.

EPA is a sprawling organization, offering everything from advice on eradicating bedbugs to state-by-state data showing the first frost of autumn comes later than it ever has historically. Pruitt, who sued the agency a number of times while attorney general of Oklahoma, came into the agency pledging to scale-back its reach, leave more rulemaking and enforcement to states and get "back to basics." Critics, including Democrats in Congress, have said he's too cozy with the industries he's supposed to regulate and wondered about the need for a \$25,000 soundproof "privacy booth."

Pruitt dropped Darwin's name this month at a congressional oversight hearing when explaining that the agency is "actually partnering with Toyota to begin a 'lean' process at the agency to evaluate management practices."

"The agency for many years — and this is something I found surprising — has not measured outcomes consistently," he added.

Toyota introduced lean manufacturing into the U.S. in the 1980s when it began building factories outside Japan for the first time. For a quarter century, Toyota has also had a non-profit affiliate, called the Toyota Production System Support Center, that consults with Toyota suppliers and outside manufacturers, and provides advice to organizations, such as hospitals, food banks and governments.

The EPA and several other agencies are in talks with the TSSC about a contract on how they could redesign the way they conduct environmental reviews and permit "high-priority" infrastructure projects -- pipelines, ports, bridges and the electricity grid.

Pruitt's name check of Toyota raised some initial concerns that EPA was partnering with a company that it also regulated. Since the contract under discussion would be with a non-profit affiliate, the risks aren't as great, said George Wyeth, a career EPA attorney who retired this year.

"There is a potential ethics issue here, but not a big one," Wyeth said in an interview.

Still, longtime staff members are skeptical. It's not the first time the agency has tapped a management trend, according to John O'Grady, a 31-year EPA veteran who spoke in his capacity as president of Council 238 of the American Federation of Government Employees.

"I've been through too many flavors-of-the-month, of-the-year, whatever it is. They do it intensely for a while -- and then it just goes away," he said. "I'm very skeptical."

O'Grady said he's concerned that, because the agency hasn't conducted a true workforce analysis in 20 years, any decisions about the organization won't have sufficient data. And that could lead to staff cuts when more staff may be necessary to work on the EPA's growing portfolio, he said.

Darwin said that "lean" is in some ways a misnomer, and the goal of the process at EPA isn't to cut staff.

"It's not about creating the ability to reduce the size of an organization," Darwin said. "What it can do is allow it to become more effective and more efficient so that if we do create a capacity to do more with less."

Reuters

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release.

The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

When EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt first announced he planned to repeal the Clean Power Plan, it was not clear whether the agency intended to replace it. At his first congressional hearing earlier this month, Pruitt said he planned to replace it.

The notice specifically asks for comment on measures to reduce carbon emissions directly at a power plant.

Obama's Clean Power Plan allowed states to reduce power plant emissions by using a series of different measures across their plant fleets, which some industry groups said went beyond the scope of the federal Clean Air Act.

The EPA is also asking for comment on the role and responsibility of states in regulating power plants for greenhouse gas emissions.

The notice said EPA also wants to hear from states including California and New York, which already have programs to reduce emissions from power plants, to see how their programs could interact with a replacement rule.

Environmental groups, who plan to continue challenging the agency's moves against the CPP in court, said on Monday the agency is not serious about offering a valid replacement to the Obama-era regulation.

"A weaker replacement of the Clean Power Plan is a non-starter. Americans - who depend on EPA to protect their health and climate - deserve real solutions, not scams," said David Doniger, director of climate and clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365495-epa-chief-pruitt-had-office-swept-for-surveillance-bugs#.Wjg7sWMetRY.twitter>

EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

By Tim Cama, 12/18/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices.

The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a "sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices" in Administrator Scott Pruitt's office at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show.

The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt's arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs.

Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head.

He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of

dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

Pruitt's staff has declined to release his schedule in advance over security concerns, and the New York Times reported that he asks some employees to leave their phones behind when meeting with him.

Like other security measures, the EPA defended the surveillance sweep as a response to unprecedented threats against Pruitt, whose aggressive deregulatory agenda has angered environmentalists and many others.

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and security decisions are made by EPA's Protective Service Detail," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said.

Lisa Jackson, who was EPA administrator from 2009 to 2013 under former President Barack Obama, also had a similar security sweep undertaken in the office, Wilcox said. Apple Inc., where Jackson oversees environmental initiatives, did not respond to a request for comment.

The Washington Post reported in September that the EPA had seen more threats against Pruitt than any previous administrator.

Doug Parker, who worked at the EPA for 25 years, mostly as a special agent in the criminal investigation division, said a bug sweep of the administrator's office is unusual.

"It doesn't strike me as completely out of left field, but it's certainly not routine, even in the administrator's office," said Parker, who retired in 2016 and now leads Earth & Water Strategies, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm.

"There could be valid concerns," Parker said, pointing to national security-related conversations

and foreign delegations that sometimes come to the EPA building.

“But it is certainly not something that was a routine occurrence in past administrator’s offices.”

Reuters

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/19/us-congress-poised-to-approve-biggest-tax-overhaul-in-30-years.html>

US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

By Staff, 12/19/17

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump.

The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote.

The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said.

With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain.

Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The end-of-year sprint toward passage represents a remarkable recovery of Republican fortunes since the middle of this year, when the party's drive to dismantle former Democratic President Barack Obama's Obamacare healthcare law crumbled in the Senate and prospects for a tax overhaul seemed doomed by party infighting.

Lingering doubts about fate of the tax bill all but vanished on Monday after two of the last Senate Republican holdouts, Susan Collins and Mike Lee, agreed to support the legislation.

"I'm ready to vote," Republican Senator John Kennedy told Reuters. "I felt like we should have voted this weekend."

'New Gilded Age'

Democrats, who unanimously oppose the Republican bill, railed against it as a giveaway to corporations and the wealthy that would add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade and deepen the U.S. income gap between rich and poor.

"There are so many rip-offs in this bill that people are going to say this is some kind of new Gilded Age," said Senator Ron Wyden, top Democrat on the Senate Tax Committee.

The House, where Republicans hold a 239-193 voting majority, was likely to see a smattering of "no" votes from Republican fiscal hawks and lawmakers from the high-tax states of New York, New Jersey and California who oppose a provision that would scale back a popular deduction for state and local taxes.

"It's still a bill that's going to give tax relief to other parts of America on the backs of New Yorkers. So I'm still going to vote 'no,'" said Republican Representative Dan Donovan of New York.

The legislation would also repeal a federal fine imposed on Americans under Obamacare for not

obtaining health insurance coverage, a change that could undermine the 2010 healthcare law formally known as the Affordable Care Act.

Vice President Mike Pence took the precaution of rescheduling a trip to Egypt and Israel for January to be on hand this week, just in case his tie-breaking voting power is needed to ensure Senate passage of the tax bill.

Republicans, who control the 100-seat Senate by only a 52-48 margin, can afford to lose support from no more than two party lawmakers. Republican Senator Jeff Flake was still undecided late on Monday. Senator John McCain, who has brain cancer, was spending time with family in Arizona.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-teams-meeting-with-muellers-office-poised-to-ratchet-up-tensions/2017/12/18/15dac668-e41d-11e7-a65d-1ac0fd7f097e_story.html?utm_term=.6bed5005d264

Trump team's meeting with Mueller's office poised to ratchet up tensions

By Devlin Barrett, Josh Dawsey, and Carol Leonnig, 12/19/17

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared.

But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump.

People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George

Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials. The special counsel's office has continued to request new documents related to the campaign, and members of Mueller's team have told others they expect to be working through much of 2018, at a minimum.

The dynamic threatens to intensify the already inflamed political atmosphere enveloping the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Even as White House lawyers have pledged to cooperate with Mueller, Trump and his allies have accused the Justice Department and FBI of bias and overreach.

The latest salvo came this past weekend, when a lawyer for the presidential transition accused Mueller of wrongfully obtaining thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration. The special counsel's office said all the material was legally obtained.

The meeting's outcome could deepen tensions as many Trump supporters question Mueller's credibility and Democrats express fear that the president will seek to fire the special counsel.

Ty Cobb, the White House lawyer overseeing the response to the Russia investigation, did not respond to phone calls and text messages seeking comment. Peter Carr, a spokesman for the special counsel, declined to comment.

White House lawyers have told the president he could be exonerated as early as the beginning of the year, after previously reassuring him that he would be cleared by Thanksgiving and Christmas, as The Washington Post previously reported. They have stated publicly that all White House interviews are over and that Mueller's team is no longer seeking White House documents.

In the meeting this week, they plan to ask Mueller's investigators if they need more information before reaching a conclusion that the probe as related to Trump is complete, according to a person familiar with the Trump team's plan who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

The question that White House lawyers will pose to the special counsel's office, according to the person: "You've had all these witnesses, all these records. Is there anything else you need from the White House?"

Until now, Trump's legal team has repeatedly pledged cooperation with Mueller's office. A White House spokesman said there was no plan to change the strategy.

Trump's legal team has reassured him that it sees no evidence of collusion or obstruction in the records that it turned over, White House advisers said. While the lawyers have told Trump that they expect the investigative team will continue its work related to former campaign chairman Paul Manafort deep into next year, as well as possibly Flynn, they said they believe Mueller should be close to wrapping up the focus on the current White House.

Trump himself has expressed frustration with the probe but has shown optimism that it will not touch him. He told associates recently that he harbors no deep concern over the investigation and noted that his lawyers talk with Mueller's team regularly, according to a person who spoke with Trump last week and spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

When pressed by two advisers to take the matter more seriously and asked why he is so confident in his lawyers, Trump brushed off the concerns. "He is living in his own world," the person said, predicting that Trump would erupt at some point in 2018 if the probe continued to drag on.

Another associate said that even in private, Trump is "confident, even arrogant" that he has done nothing wrong.

"There is no collusion," the president said at the White House on Sunday, after saying he was not planning to fire Mueller.

Among people familiar with the probe, there is widespread skepticism that the special counsel's

investigation is drawing to a close.

Already, Manafort and his former deputy Rick Gates have been indicted on money-laundering and other charges related to work they did in Ukraine before the 2016 race. Two others have pleaded guilty and are cooperating, giving investigators new leads to pursue. Agents have gathered huge volumes of documents and conducted their first round of interviews with White House officials.

As recently as last week, Mueller's team was still asking questions about the firing of James B. Comey as FBI director, one person said.

Legal experts said Mueller would have little incentive to clear the president or other White House aides while he is seeking more information from witnesses.

"I think it's possible Mueller's team could give them an idea of how much longer they anticipate their investigation will last," said Peter Zeidenberg, the former deputy special counsel who helped investigate the leak of Valerie Plame's covert role as a CIA operative. "I would be shocked if they have a timeline anything similar to what we've heard coming from the White House."

"As far as a clean bill of health, I can't imagine they are going to be prepared to make a decision like that at this point," he said of the special counsel's team. "They are not going to be in a position to make that call until they finish this case and finish discussing all the evidence they have."

Mark Corallo, a former spokesman for Trump's legal team, said he thinks it is unlikely that the probe wraps up by the end of the year, but he said he believes it could conclude in the spring. He said that Mueller is aware of the political implications surrounding his investigation.

"Bob understands you can't have a president who is living under this cloud of uncertainty," Corallo said, adding that he believes it is possible that the special counsel will at some point call Trump's lawyers and say, "We are done with the president. There is nothing there."

The high-stakes meeting between White House lawyers and Mueller's team comes as conservative lawmakers and pundits have intensified their demands for a second special counsel to investigate the FBI, pointing to text messages between two former FBI officials discussing their dislike of Trump.

"We are now beginning to understand the magnitude of the insider bias on Mueller's team," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) said last week. Another member of the committee, Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), said Mueller and his team should wear "Democratic Donkeys or Hillary T-shirts."

A White House adviser said the president has enjoyed the attacks. In recent weeks, he has spoken to a number of Fox News hosts, Republican lawmakers and others who have castigated Mueller's team, the adviser said.

The attacks on Mueller's investigation grew this weekend after an attorney for the presidential transition told congressional investigators Saturday that thousands of pages of the organization's communications were provided to Mueller by the federal General Services Administration.

Trump's lawyers learned Mueller had the emails this month when witnesses were quizzed on the material. Some of the documents contained sensitive information that wasn't related to the Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the material.

A GSA spokeswoman declined to comment. Mueller's team said it obtained all documents legally.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-to-get-23-of-tax-cuts-for-individuals-under-gop-bill-1513644268>

Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

By Editors, 12/19/17

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation.

That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law.

The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less.

The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

America's most-affluent households, those earning \$500,000 or more a year, which account for 1% of filers, would also get \$61 billion in cuts in the first year, according to the JCT analysis. They would get a cut of \$12 billion by 2027.

That includes income earned by pass-through businesses such as partnerships and S-corporations that pay taxes on individual returns. It doesn't include the benefits of estate-tax reductions.

Much of the rest would go to businesses in the form of corporate tax cuts, according to the JCT analysis.

The tax plan took another step toward passage Monday, when Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who had been on the fence, said she would support the bill. Mr. Trump plans to sign the bill later this week.

Trump administration officials argue the business tax cuts will help individuals, too, because it will induce companies to hire more and boost workers' wages.

"I don't think it necessarily changes my life one way or another," said Lisa Joles of Concord, Ohio, who runs the heat and air-conditioning repair shop her parents started in the 1970s. Her business brought in about \$1.5 million this past year, and she takes home about \$50,000 a year. "It could give me or someone else in the middle class that little bit of extra money that they may go out and spend, and it may boost the economy, but I almost feel like that would be a short-term effect."

The muted reaction is consistent with polls showing that the tax cuts aren't very popular. A Quinnipiac University poll released last week found that 55% of those surveyed disapprove of the tax plan, compared with 26% who support it. Republicans were the only group who supported the tax plan, with the support of 66%.

Many households are still weighing how the complicated plan will affect them. The plan recasts many features of the individual tax code—doubling a child tax credit and the standard deduction for households, while narrowing deductions for state and local taxes, mortgages and the personal exemption. That means it will play out differently for many, depending on factors such as whether they live in high-tax states, have big mortgages or have many children.

Cory Dahl, 59, a pastor who lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., said that even though a few extra hundred dollars a year won't make much difference, he is happy to get it. "Five hundred dollars is not a ton of money, but I'd rather have it in my bank account than in my tax payment," he said.

Mr. Dahl has taken the standard deduction in recent years, and he lives in a church-owned home, so he has no mortgage. He thinks raising the standard deduction will help middle-class households like his.

His niece, Katie Dahl, who lives 20 miles away in Baileys Harbor, Wis., is apprehensive. She said her biggest concern is the repeal of the Affordable Care Act requirement that individuals buy health insurance. Both Ms. Dahl, 34, and her husband, Rich Higdon, who is a musician and a potter, rely on the ACA exchange for a heavily subsidized health-insurance plan. They pay \$12 a month for a silver-level plan that covers both of them. With an income of about \$41,000 a year, Ms. Dahl says the ACA has made them both confident that they could survive as self-employed artists.

“I’m worried what the mandate will do to premiums, and if it will go so far as to start the unraveling of Obamacare, which has been a big boon to us financially,” she said.

While the middle class as a whole will see benefits, some people will end up worse off. Using an alternative measure of household income, the Tax Policy Center found that of those households in the very middle of the income distribution, making \$48,600 to \$86,100 a year, 91.3% would receive a tax cut next year. But 7.3% would receive a tax increase. By 2025, 10.9% would receive a tax increase.

Many taxpayers are worried that they will fall into that latter group. Jon Rose, 45, who runs a car-detailing shop in Carlisle, Pa., could see a cut from his current top tax rate of 25% because he runs an S corporation, a pass-through business that is eligible for a 20% deduction from business income if it meets certain conditions. His accountant told him he would likely save about \$3,000 as a result of tax changes. The problem, he said, is that his accountant also said he has about \$16,000 worth of personal exemptions that he would no longer be able to claim.

Congress has raised the child-tax credit to \$2,000 a child, but he was even dubious about how much that would help him. “I only have two kids, it’s not like I have 16,” said Mr. Rose, whose wife is a high-school teacher. “It doesn’t sound great.”

He said that if he somehow ends up saving an extra \$500 or even \$1,000, that wouldn’t mean too much to him. “I wouldn’t even notice,” he said. “It wouldn’t make any difference, especially if it’s just coming out gradually over time. If it’s \$1,000, it’s \$40 a paycheck. That’s dinner.”

Corrections & Amplifications

An earlier version of this article incorrectly reported that middle-income households would receive \$144 billion in total tax cuts over a decade under the Republican tax plan, or 10% of the total net tax cut. It also incorrectly reported that affluent households making more than \$500,000 would receive \$171 billion in total tax cuts over a decade. Those calculations were based on an incorrect reading of tables released Monday by the Joint Committee on Taxation. The article also incorrectly reported that households making \$500,000 or more comprise 6% of total filers. They comprise 1% of total filers.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

DOW RISES 5000 POINTS ON THE YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER - MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!



6.1K



8.2K



36K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

Stocks and the economy have a long way to go after the Tax Cut Bill is totally understood and appreciated in scope and size. Immediate expensing will have a big impact. Biggest Tax Cuts and Reform EVER passed. Enjoy, and create many beautiful JOBS!



5.8K



5.2K



24K



To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Mon 2/12/2018 9:45:55 PM
Subject: Afternoon Energy: It's budget day — Infrastructure blueprint finally released — Lawmakers want casino probe

By Caitlin Oprysko | 02/12/2018 04:44 PM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff and Alex Guillén

BUDGET DAY IS HERE: The White House rolled out its fiscal 2019 budget proposal this morning, as well as its long-awaited proposal to overhaul the country's infrastructure, Pro's Sarah Ferris and Jennifer Scholtes report. Though both plans are unlikely to be enacted as-is, there is a lot of unpack in both. Let's get started:

— **Interior Department:** The budget proposes trimming Interior's funding for fiscal 2019 to about \$11.5 billion, down from the \$13.5 billion it received in 2017, the last time Congress approved a yearlong spending deal. The proposal would, however, create a fund at the department for public lands infrastructure improvements that would cost \$6.5 billion over 10 years, Ben Lefebvre reports. The White House is proposing partially offsetting the fund by repealing annual payments of \$4 million to counties to support geothermal energy projects and reauthorizing the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, which would allow Interior to use the money it makes selling public land on conservation projects. Also included in the proposal is \$18 million to jump-start Secretary Ryan Zinke's plans to reorganize the agency.

— **EPA:** EPA is one of the agencies that would see the largest funding cut, with the administration proposing to slash its budget by over a third. EPA would see its budget slashed by 34 percent, a deeper cut than the administration proposed last year, Pro's Emily Holden writes. Republican appropriators have noted EPA's budget had already been dropping for years, and lawmakers from both parties criticized the president's blueprint for cutting popular programs.

The White House also requested an additional \$724 million for EPA in an addendum to its 2019 budget proposal meant to reflect Congress's recent increase of spending caps. The extra money would be split between the Superfund program and the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, Pro's Alex Guillén reports.

— **The Department of Energy** is one of the rare departments that would get a funding boost under Trump's budget, to around \$30.6 billion, but as Pro's Darius Dixon reports the figure "masks a big divide on how DOE's missions would be funded." The budget calls for a funding shift towards the department's nuclear weapons programs and away from its research and applied energy offices, though the last-minute addendum removed some of the bite from those cuts to energy and science programs. In addition, the administration revived its plan to sell transmissions assets held by DOE power marketing administrations, restart the nuclear waste fee and rescind the borrowing authority of the Western Area Power Administration.

— **Army Corps of Engineers:** Trump's blueprint calls for a 22 percent slash to the Army Corps of Engineers' budget for building and maintaining ports, waterways, levees and ecosystem

projects, which lies in contrast with the administration's massive infrastructure push. The proposal would fund the Corps at \$4.8 billion, down from \$6 billion in fiscal 2017, Pro's Annie Snider [reports](#). It would also [reduce a tax](#) on the value of goods passing through U.S. ports, and ask the barge industry to begin paying more for upkeep of locks and dams it uses.

— **The proposal once again puts** the Chemical Safety Board on the chopping block, though Congress last year ignored the same request from the White House to eliminate the agency responsible for investigating accidents involving hazardous materials at refineries. [More on this](#) from Ben.

— **The Nuclear Regulatory Commission** is asking for about a \$60 million spending increase compared to its current levels, mostly for the stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project, Darius [reports](#). But with the \$971 million the agency is requesting, it also says it hopes to cut its staff by 4 percent.

Happy Budget Day and Infrastructure Day, and welcome to Afternoon Energy. I'm your host Caitlin Oprysko. Send suggestions, news and tips to coprysko@politico.com, mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at [@caitlinoprysko](#), [@dailym1](#), [@nickjuliano](#), [@Morning_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

IF A PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET REQUEST WASN'T EXCITING ENOUGH: The White House's infrastructure blueprint contains measures intended to expedite the environmental review process, as expected. But it will be up to Congress to actually implement many of the changes, Alex notes. To advance Trump's goal of a two-year permitting process, the proposal would ask Congress to set a 21-month deadline for agencies to finish their National Environmental Policy Act reviews, with an additional three months to issue any necessary permits. The package also proposes limiting agencies' comments on other reviews to their areas of expertise; making it easier for agencies to issue "categorical exclusions" shielding projects from detailed reviews; and allowing "non-federal entities" to help pay for NEPA reviews under some circumstances. It would also call for eliminating Section 309 of the Clean Air Act that requires EPA to review, comment on and rate other agencies' Environmental Impact Statements. Alex has more on the proposal [here](#).

Closing the window on permit challenges: The infrastructure plan also aims dramatically reduce the legal window for filing challenges to environmental reviews and federal permits from six years to 150 days — another change Congress would have to actually implement. The plan also proposes limiting the possibility of injunctive relief to "exceptional circumstances" and preventing courts from reviewing "currentness of data" in environmental studies as long as agencies abided by their own guidelines.

CONNECTICUT LAWMAKERS WANT CASINO PROBE: A group of Democratic lawmakers from Connecticut today asked the Interior's inspector general to look into why a pair of Indian tribes are being prevented from opening a new casino there. As Pro's Nick Juliano [reported](#) this month, Interior will not sign off on an arrangement that would allow the casino open within a mandated deadline, after a lobbying campaign from casino giant MGM. Now, Sens. [Richard Blumenthal](#) and [Chris Murphy](#) and Reps. [John Larson](#) and [Joe Courtney](#) are citing

that reporting in their call for an investigation into whether Interior ignored its legal trust responsibilities to the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes. In their letter, they argue MGM's "activities should have had no bearing on' Interior's decision." More [here](#) from Nick.

INTERIOR EXTENDING MERGER STUDY: Interior said today it needs a more time to determine whether to merge the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. Zinke said during a call with reporters about the budget proposal that the department hopes to make a decision in the next 90 days. "If we combine them, what are the unintended consequences?" he said. "The last thing we need is to reduce safety and reliability. We should know in about 90 days where we sit." Ben has more [here](#).

GREEN CAPITOL SIGNS LIBERTARIAN THINK TANK: The Niskanen Center, a libertarian think tank, has hired Green Capitol to lobby on changes to the Natural Gas Act, according to a [recent lobbying disclosure](#). The think tank's chief counsel David Bookbinder told POLITICO Influence today that Green Capitol was hired to push for "a series of modest procedural amendments" to the law's provisions that affect interstate pipelines in order to "enhance the protections of property owners." He said Niskanen is pushing for changes that would prohibit pipeline companies from exercising eminent domain until they meet all conditions contained in FERC's certificate to build. "This should be nonpartisan and should not be highly controversial," he added. (h/t [POLITICO Influence](#))

SHELL REACHES DEAL ON POLLUTION CONTROL: Shell Chemical has reached a deal with federal and state officials to spend \$10 million on new pollution controls and monitors for its chemical plant in Norco, La., according to the Justice Department. The authorities allege Shell violated the Clean Air Act when it did not properly run industrial flares at the plant. The newly required controls will curb 159 tons of volatile organic compounds and 18 tons of other hazardous pollutants per year. Shell has also agreed to pay civil penalties of \$350,000, \$87,500 of which will go to the state. The [consent decree](#) is open to a 45-day comment period and court approval.

QUICK HITS:

- Leak leads feds to order Cheniere to take LNG tanks offline, [Chron](#).
- Big batteries are taking a bite out of the power market, [Wall Street Journal](#).
- OPEC hikes its 2018 forecast for oil supply growth on a flood of U.S. crude, [CNBC](#).

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- The mysterious [oppo researcher](#) working in the White House lawyer's office
- White House officials: Talk of Trump replacing Kelly '[much ado about nothing](#)'
- Republicans [moving forward](#) with Trump's immigration framework

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/afternoon-energy/2018/02/its-budget-day-100868>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Trump launches \$1.5 trillion sales pitch [Back](#)

By Brianna Gurciullo | 02/11/2018 05:00 PM EDT

The White House finally rolled out President Donald Trump's long-awaited [infrastructure plan](#) Monday, swinging for the fences with a \$1.5 trillion initiative that is light on new federal dollars — but could inspire a wave of toll roads, ease decades-old regulations and permanently change cities' and states' expectations for assistance from Washington.

"It is time to give Americans the working, modern infrastructure they deserve," Trump said in a message to Congress accompanying his "legislative outline."

The proposal faces tough odds in Congress: Some conservative Republicans are already expressing shock at Trump's total price tag, while Democrats say the share coming from the federal government would be too little to fill the backlog of crumbling roads, bridges, railroads, tunnels and airports, along with other needs like rural broadband service, veterans' hospitals, toxic waste cleanups and drinking water.

Trump is proposing to provide \$200 billion for his plan over the next 10 years — "[not a large amount](#)," he has conceded — paid for by unspecified cuts elsewhere in the budget proposal that the White House also plans to release Monday. That spending is meant to draw an additional \$1.3 trillion or more in investments from cities, states, private investors and other sources.

But more fundamentally, the White House says it will finally address a dysfunctional system in which Washington calls too many of the shots, federal red tape gets in the way and some communities fail to put enough "skin in the game" — all while dire needs go unmet.

"The current system is fundamentally broken, and it's broken in two different ways," a senior administration official told reporters during a briefing Saturday. "We are underinvesting in our infrastructure, and we have a permitting process that takes so long that even when funds are adequate, it can take a decade to build critical infrastructure."

Trump's plan, the official said, offers "a permanent fix." The plan also includes specific money for rural communities, aim to encourage apprenticeships and other forms of workforce training, and pay for unspecified "transformative," "next-century-type" projects that would "lift the American spirit," the official said.

However, many infrastructure advocates believe that the real fix that's needed is a permanent new revenue stream, something Trump's plan doesn't address.

Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio, the top Democrat on the Transportation Committee, said in an

address Friday that Trump's plan would "slash the federal commitment to a national infrastructure network."

"This is not a real infrastructure plan — it's simply another scam, an attempt by this administration to privatize critical government functions, and create windfalls for their buddies on Wall Street," DeFazio said. "This fake proposal will not address the serious infrastructure needs facing this country, so our potholed roads will get worse, our bridges and transit systems will become more dangerous, and our tolls will become higher."

Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the top Democrat on the Finance Committee, called the plan "another broken promise to rebuild America's aging infrastructure." He added, "\$200 billion is a drop in the bucket compared to the \$1.5 trillion Republicans in Congress just spent to slash taxes for multinational corporations and the donor class."

But key Republicans were quick to issue supportive statements Monday.

"Please permit us to say that President Trump hit the nail on the head when constructing this plan to rebuild America's infrastructure," House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden (R-Ore.) said in a statement issued with three of his subcommittee chairs, Fred Upton (R-Mich.), John Shimkus (R-Ill.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.). "Improving our country's infrastructure can be a bipartisan effort, and we stand ready to strap on our work boots and pave the way for success with our colleagues across the aisle."

The plan that the White House released Monday is a statement of principles that Congress will have to translate into legislation — potentially leaving the fate of Trump's proposal in the hands of 11 House and Senate committees that oversee slices of the policies in play. The kickoff included a White House meeting Monday with state and local officials from both parties, including Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, Maine Gov. Paul LePage, New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.

"Washington will no longer be a roadblock to progress," Trump said in brief televised remarks. "Washington will be your partner."

Administration officials said to expect an extended sales pitch from Trump and his Cabinet, who "will be talking about infrastructure all across the nation."

The woeful state of U.S. infrastructure is something Republicans and Democrats largely agree about, even if they don't agree on the solutions. The American Society of Civil Engineers has said the backlog comes to \$4.59 trillion in needed investments by 2025.

But already, some lawmakers are expressing deep concerns about the administration's plan to pay for the federal share of its proposal with budget cuts instead of proposing new revenue sources. Even some Republicans, notably House Transportation Chairman Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania, are pushing for a hike in the federal gasoline tax that pays for the ailing Highway Trust Fund.

Democrats, meanwhile, are criticizing the White House's push to dramatically speed up the federal permitting process for infrastructure projects — and warning that the Senate won't go along with any effort to impose arbitrary time limits on regulatory reviews.

"There's zero appetite for that," Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) told POLITICO last week. "There may be a handful of Democrats that would support that but they'd also lose a couple of Republicans."

The senior administration official said the White House has no intention of dismantling environmental protections — but does want to shorten the process to two years, for example by letting one agency render the final yes-or-no verdict. The White House is preparing to achieve some of this streamlining through executive action. But it also proposes changes to statutes as well, for example by eliminating the section of the Clean Air Act that requires the Environmental Protection Agency to review other agencies' environmental impact statements, and by revoking the EPA's power to veto Clean Water Act permits issued by the Army Corps of Engineers.

"We're not saying you can have a bigger impact on endangered species, or the water can be dirtier or the air can be dirtier, or anything like that," the official said.

Democratic lawmakers and liberal groups like the Center for American Progress have countered that agencies have yet to follow through on recent laws that would let them streamline permitting. CAP has argued that to accelerate the process, the most effective strategy would be fully funding agencies like the Department of Transportation so they have enough staffing and technology.

The Natural Resources Defense Council denounced the plan Sunday as a "disaster" and an "unacceptable corporate giveaway," saying the proposal to speed up environmental reviews "would leave local residents all-but voiceless when it comes to the massive projects that will reshape their communities."

Another source of controversy is the plan's heavy preference for doling out money to states and communities that are willing to put up the most cash on their own. Democrats say that would cause cities and states to hike taxes and fees on their residents, and would heavily disadvantage large projects such as the multibillion-dollar effort to rebuild rail infrastructure in and around New York City.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has warned that drivers could soon be paying "Trump tolls" because of the plan's incentives for communities to seek money from private investors.

"Hedge funds and wealthy investors will want projects that generate a profit by charging middle-class Americans hundreds of dollars a year in tolls, taxes and fees," Schumer wrote in an op-ed just before Trump's State of the Union address. "Our nation's roads, bridges and tunnels would become tools for wealthy investors to profit off the middle class rather than the job-creating public assets they ought to be."

The White House says it would be up to local communities to decide how to raise money to pay for their projects, with sources that could include property taxes, sales taxes or user fees.

But the administration's making it clear that communities looking for help from Washington have to show they're prepared to pay for their own needs.

"It's all about how do we get people to compete around in projects that they truly care about," the senior administration official said. "And how do we know they truly care about them? Well, because they've got a lot of skin in the game on the project."

Instead, the official said: "A lot of comments I've received since starting this job are people who are going, 'This is an absolutely critical project, it has to be done, it's vital to our community. Our economy will boom if we do this.' And I ask, 'How much you've invested in it?' And they're like, 'No, we're not investing in anything. We'd like you to invest in it.'"

Those comments fit in with the message of a White House budget document last spring that bemoaned what it called communities' over-reliance on federal dollars — rhetoric that drew a rebuke from the GOP-led Senate Appropriations Committee. DOT has similarly told New York state and New Jersey not to expect the federal government to pay half of a proposed \$13 billion rail tunnel project across the Hudson River, despite previous assurances from the Obama administration.

The senior administration official said that contrary to what many of the critics say, the federal government pays already only about 14 percent of the nation's overall infrastructure needs. "If you go and ask the public what their preference is, they would prefer to invest locally as opposed to sending money to Washington," the official said.

Meanwhile, fiscal conservatives are already casting side-eyes at the \$1.5 trillion total price tag, even though only \$200 billion would come from the federal budget. That's especially true after Congress enacted tax cuts that are expected to add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit in the coming decade and both parties agreed last week to boost overall spending by \$300 billion over two years.

On the other hand, last week's spending deal gives lawmakers extra cash to work with. And Trump administration officials have been scurrying since Friday to craft an addendum to its fiscal year 2019 budget proposal that will tell legislators just how the president would like to see those dollars spent.

"Take the money that the Democrats want to put to these social programs, and move it to things like infrastructure, move it to things like opioid relief, move it to things that are in line with the president's priorities, so that — if it does get spent — at least it get spent to the right places," White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said on "Fox News Sunday."

In Saturday's briefing, the senior White House official stressed that Trump's infrastructure pitch isn't "a take-it-or-leave-it proposal."

"This is the start of a negotiation — bicameral, bipartisan negotiation — to find the best solution for infrastructure in the U.S.," the official said.

The official added that Trump "is open to new sources of funding" as well. However, something as politically perilous as a gasoline tax increase isn't likely.

Half of the \$200 billion would be allocated to a competitive program in which states and localities can apply for federal funding. Those who have already secured their own sources of cash would be most likely to receive federal money.

Ten percent, or \$20 billion, would add to existing federal loan programs for infrastructure and broaden eligibility for tax-exempt private activity bonds. And another 10 percent would be set aside for what the Trump administration describes as "transformative" projects — a category that some people think could include Elon Musk's gee-whiz "Hyperloop," although the White House said the New York-New Jersey rail tunnel might qualify as well.

A quarter, or \$50 billion, would be reserved for projects in rural parts of the country. That money would go to states as block grants with relatively few strings. It would at least partially address concerns from lawmakers who say rural infrastructure projects may be relatively unappealing to private investors — and seems tailor-made to attract support in the Senate.

The White House official indicated that governors would make the call on how to divide the rural money. In contrast, some rural lawmakers have been pushing to steer a designated portion to broadband internet service.

Five percent of the federal dollars would be used to set up a "capital financing fund."

Some component of the plan will also center on workforce training, the official said. The administration will suggest broadening eligibility for Pell grants, tweaking requirements for trade licensing and growing apprenticeships.

Before his election, Trump swore to voters that a bill to generate \$1 trillion in investment would materialize in his first 100 days as president. But the administration has delayed a plan again and again as it first crusaded to repeal Obamacare and then to rework the tax code.

The number has ballooned to \$1.5 trillion "because we've actually received a sort of more enthusiastic response than we anticipated from state and local governments," the White House official said.

Alex Guillén contributed to this report.

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Trump scales back request for stiff budget cuts [Back](#)

By Sarah Ferris and Jennifer Scholtes | 02/11/2018 07:01 PM EDT

The White House released a decade-long [budget request](#) Monday that lays out \$3.6 trillion in deficit reduction while calling for hundreds of billions more to be pumped into the Pentagon.

The Trump administration is proposing deeper cuts to safety net programs — including Medicare, which the president on the campaign trail swore he wouldn't touch — to help fund what it calls a "more lethal" military.

But the White House's request is a jumble of mixed messages, since the Trump administration was forced to do some fast accounting after lawmakers on Friday [cleared](#) a massive two-year spending deal, [H.R. 1892 \(115\)](#).

President Donald Trump's [revised budget](#) would pour more cash into domestic programs across the federal government, even calling for an increase to the State Department, which the administration proposed to slash by 27 percent in the original document.

The White House is [telling Congress](#) just how the president wants to see lawmakers divvy up the hundreds of billions of dollars in new funding authority, while at the same time encouraging them not to spend all that cash.

"These are spending caps. They are not spending floors," White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said on "Fox News Sunday." "We're going to show how you can run the government without spending all of it. That will be our 2019 budget."

On the Hill, lawmakers — as is usual with a president's budget request, which is only a request — stressed they will write their own spending bills. "The Committee will perform our own analysis and craft legislation that reflects the will of the House and the needs of the people we represent," House Appropriations Chairman [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) (R-N.J.) said in a statement.

Senate Appropriations Chairman [Thad Cochran](#) (R-Miss.) said in a statement that the Trump budget is a "starting point" for lawmakers.

The requested defense build-up appears to be the biggest single shift in Trump's budget compared to his first year, when his Pentagon proposal was panned by Congress' defense hawks, who sought much higher sums.

To help pay for it, Trump's budget office has requested scraping more from other social programs, like food stamps, and proposing changes to Medicare.

The federal health program is one of the fastest-growing drivers of the national debt. To help stem that rise, Trump's budget proposes a slew of vague reforms including improvements to "drug pricing and payment policies" and "government-imposed provider burdens."

Last year, Medicare was mentioned just 10 times in Trump's budget. This year, the program is mentioned more than 100 times.

The proposal is a victory for Mulvaney, who has begged the president to tackle entitlement spending, including Medicare, since their early days at the White House.

The budget also requests new — though vague — welfare reforms like: "Get noncustodial parents to work," which it projects to save \$96 million.

The bones of the budget are largely the same as last year. The portion that does not take into account extra spending under the new budget caps would call for slashing funding for housing assistance and student aid while limiting payouts for farmers and people on disability insurance.

"Just like every American family, the Budget makes hard choices: Fund what we must, cut where we can, and reduce what we borrow," Mulvaney said in a statement.

The administration has also prioritized border security — proposing to hire roughly 1,000 more patrol agents and immigration officers than its previous budget.

Afternoon briefings are scheduled explaining proposed funding for the departments of Education, Energy and Defense, as well as NASA.

Mulvaney will then elaborate on the overall proposal during testimony before the Senate Budget Committee on Tuesday and before the House Budget Committee on Wednesday.

In a stark shift from Trump's first-year budget, Republican lawmakers are likely to embrace the plan's base recommendation for \$716 billion in defense spending — the same level Congress signed into last week's budget deal.

The fiscal plan also recommends Congress buck calls for more spending on social programs, while suggesting lawmakers throw extra cash at things like infrastructure investment, "so if it does get spent, at least it gets spent in the right places," Mulvaney said.

The Trump administration has scrambled at the eleventh hour to rewrite its budget request to reflect Congress' newly sealed budget deal, essentially forced to present two visions of federal funding. OMB officials had only three days to decide how to divvy up an extra \$63 billion in nondefense spending for fiscal 2019.

"This may be the most complicated budget anyone's ever going to do," Mulvaney said on Sunday.

The proposal asks for a total of \$18 billion over fiscal years 2018 and 2019 for a border wall, while assuming there will be agreement on how to handle the legal status of young undocumented immigrants covered under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

The budget again reflects Trump's businessman-like commitment to shrinking the federal

bureaucracy, for the first time making public the White House's plans for trimming staff and operations across the federal government.

Those "workforce reduction" plans — which rely on hiring freezes, buyouts and stripping protections that make it easier to fire workers — are the result of nearly a year of back-and-forth between OMB and agencies. Some departments, like Education, have already starting giving workers incentives to leave, while the Agriculture Department has made clear it will only be reorganizing, not cutting employees.

The plan is also expected to lay out a new performance bonus system for workers deemed successful, according to multiple reports. The new system would save billions, according to USA Today, by reducing automatic pay increases.

The Trump administration has dwelled most on the \$200 billion the core plan requests for infrastructure investment over the next 10 years. But that proposal differs little from what the White House requested last year. And the president has conceded that the federal share of his infrastructure vision is "not a large amount" on its own.

Last year, Trump's first budget arrived with a thud on Capitol Hill, proposing the most extreme drawdown in federal spending in decades. In it, Trump asked Congress to gut programs with decades-old bipartisan support, like scientific research and education, while proposing lawmakers take an ax to safety net programs and foreign aid.

Amid crisis-to-crisis budgeting on Capitol Hill, though, there has been little fanfare in the lead up to this latest budget proposal.

"The president's budget is just a nice book," Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas) said in an interview. "It's good to know where their priorities are, but the ones that make a difference are the ones here."

Victoria Guida contributed to this report.

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White House proposes cut to Interior's budget, adds infrastructure fund [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 02/12/2018 11:53 AM EDT

The Trump administration is proposing cutting the Interior Department's budget for fiscal 2019, even as it aims to fund new infrastructure spending, according to its latest [budget plan](#).

The proposed reduction to about \$11.5 billion, which includes \$339 million allotted under last week's new budget caps agreement, compares to the \$13.5 billion budget enacted in 2017 and comes after Congress ignored President Donald Trump's request last year for a similar reduction.

The White House budget proposal would grant Interior a public lands infrastructure fund that would cost \$6.5 billion over 10 years. The fund would start with \$152 million next year and climb to \$878 million by 2028. It would finance schools under the Bureau of Indian Education, as well as repair and maintenance of national parks and national wildlife refuges, a source familiar with the plan said.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, like his predecessors, has complained that more money is needed to repair and maintain national parks. The fund would also dovetail with Trump's call for more infrastructure spending. The fund's cost would be partially offset by repealing annual payments of \$4 million to counties to support geothermal energy projects. Further income would come from reauthorizing the [Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act](#), which would allow Interior to use the money it makes selling public land on conservation projects.

Under the new budget caps approved by Congress last week, the White House added \$271 million to its original budget plan for the National Park Service's park management, operation and maintenance.

The budget also provides \$18 million to kickstart Zinke's reorganization plans for the department, which would replace the current state-based system for regional offices to one organized around watersheds.

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White House seeks deeper EPA cuts [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 02/12/2018 11:36 AM EDT

President Donald Trump's budget proposal calls for slashing EPA's 2019 budget by 34 percent from 2017 to 5.4 billion — an even deeper cut than what the administration sought last year — and would shrink spending at the National Science Foundation by 30 percent.

The White House budget document is largely a political statement, and Congress is unlikely to adopt it at the levels suggested. Last year, the president recommended a 31 percent cut to EPA's \$8.2 billion budget and an 11 percent cut to NSF's \$7.5 billion budget.

Under the White House plan, EPA and NSF would see the biggest cuts among the federal agencies, and Democrats and environmental advocates will likely seize on the proposals as evidence of the administration's anti-science stance.

Republican appropriators have noted EPA's budget had already been dropping for years, and lawmakers from both parties [criticized](#) the president's blueprint for cutting popular programs. Both chambers ultimately moved to fund EPA for the current year at levels near the previous

year's.

Elgie Holstein, a strategic planning director at the Environmental Defense Fund who formerly worked at federal energy and environment agencies and the OMB, said EPA's spending has been "whittled away for a number of years now," by both Republicans and Democrats. Adjusted for inflation, EPA's budget is smaller than it was in the 1970s, although it has acquired many more congressionally mandated duties.

Alex Guillen contributed to this report.

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GOP tells Pruitt he will get bigger budget than requested [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/15/2017 02:42 PM EDT

Republican lawmakers made it clear today that EPA is not going to get the budget it asked for — it's going to get a whole lot more.

Multiple GOP members of the Appropriations committee overseeing EPA said they will not come close to enacting the administration's proposed 31 percent cut.

"I can assure you you're going to be the first EPA administrator that's come before this committee in eight years that actually gets more money than they asked for," Rep. [Tom Cole](#) (R-Okla.) told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "That doesn't mean you'll get as much as you've had, but you'll do better than you asked for."

Rep. [Mark Amodei](#) (R-Nev.) noted that Congress has already cut EPA's budget by more than \$2 billion since 2010. "No one's standing on the rooftops begging for dirty air and dirty water," he said in calling for no more than moderate spending reductions.

Other Republicans on the panel made sure to defend specific programs they favor.

House Appropriations Chairman [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) (R-N.J.) told Pruitt that his state is home to more than 100 of the nation's 1,300 Superfund sites. "I think it's good to move with precaution before you take too many dramatic steps," he warned about EPA's 31 percent cut to that program.

Subcommittee chairman [Ken Calvert](#) (R-Calif.) criticized steep cuts to a popular diesel engine refit program and lamented the complete deletion of targeted air shed grants.

And Rep. [Dave Joyce](#) (R-Ohio) criticized the budget for killing the \$300 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

WHAT'S NEXT: Appropriators will write EPA's spending bill for next year, expected to be released later this summer.

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White House addendum adds \$724M for Superfund, water SRFs [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 02/12/2018 12:43 PM EDT

The White House today requested an additional \$724 million for EPA in an [addendum](#) to its 2019 budget proposal meant to reflect Congress's recent increase of spending caps.

The money is split between two of EPA's biggest programs.

The White House suggests an extra \$327 million for the Superfund program, which would pay for further clean-ups. The primary budget asks for \$762 million for Superfund clean-ups, but the addendum funds would bring it back to nearly current Superfund spending levels.

The addendum also allocates \$397 million more to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. The SRFs are funded in the underlying budget at just \$1.86 billion, down about \$150 million from current levels. The twin funds were one of the few EPA programs last year for which the White House suggested increasing spending slightly.

With the extra \$724 million, EPA's budget would total more than \$6.1 billion, almost \$2 billion below current levels.

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Trump seeks boost in DOE weapons work with cuts elsewhere [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 02/12/2018 12:06 PM EDT

The Trump administration budget would shift funding toward the Energy Department's nuclear weapons programs and away from its research and applied energy offices, according to budget documents released today.

Overall funding for DOE would receive a slight boost to around \$30.6 billion, thanks to higher budget caps Congress just approved last week.

But that masks a big divide on how DOE's missions would be funded. The National Nuclear Security Administration, would get a 17.5 percent boost, or \$2.2 billion, under Trump's proposal.

The agency's other science and applied energy programs would again be in line for cuts, although slightly smaller thanks to last-minute changes. The administration initially sought to reduce those programs by nearly 19 percent, or \$3.3 billion, compared to 2017. But an [addendum](#) to the budget would restore \$1.5 billion, spread across DOE's science, fossil energy and renewable energy programs.

The administration's original [budget](#) had been planning to ask for \$29.2 billion, which would have been a 3.4 percent cut compared to fiscal 2017, according to OMB. Now, it is asking for a slight boost over the \$30.2 billion DOE received in fiscal 2017, the last time Congress passed a yearlong appropriations bill.

The White House's proposal again seeks to sell transmissions assets held by DOE power marketing administrations, restart the nuclear waste fee and rescind the borrowing authority of the Western Area Power Administration. It also seeks to sell the Tennessee Valley Authority's transmission assets, eliminate "interest payments to electric and telecommunications utilities," and reform the laws that govern how PMAs establish power rates.

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Trump budget would slash Army Corps funding, overhaul user fees [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 02/12/2018 12:03 PM EDT

Even as the Trump administration is pushing a major infrastructure agenda, it is proposing a more than 22 percent to the Army Corps of Engineers' budget for building and maintaining the country's ports, waterways, levees and ecosystem projects.

The White House budget blueprint would fund the Corps at \$4.8 billion, down from the \$6 billion the agency got for fiscal year 2017, the last time Congress approved a full year of funding.

At the same time, the Trump administration is proposing a major overhaul of how industry pays its share of the infrastructure it relies on. The budget would reduce a tax on the value of goods passing through U.S. ports, while also asking the barge industry to pay more to help maintain aging locks and dams.

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Trump budget would overhaul ports, waterways funding [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 02/12/2018 01:14 PM EDT

The Trump administration's budget blueprint proposes a major overhaul of the funding for construction and maintenance of the country's ports and inland waterway system, a move that could fundamentally alter the costs to ship commodities like coal and corn.

The proposal would slash the Harbor Maintenance Tax, which the White House describes as "a step toward providing ports greater flexibility to finance their capital and operating costs on their own." The 0.125 percent tax on goods that pass through American ports has long been a source of controversy, since Congress rarely spends the full proceeds on their intended purpose. Lawmakers reached a deal in 2014 to ramp up spending on ports; the Trump budget documents now say the tax would be reduced to align with actual spending levels.

The budget proposal would also create an annual "per vessel" fee to increase funding for the country's aging and failing system of locks and dams. The barge industry has pushed back against similar moves in the past and successfully advocated to increase its own fuel tax to raise more funding for projects. But the White House budget documents argue that tax increase is still "insufficient" to cover industry's half of new construction and major rehabilitation projects.

Overall, the Army Corps' budget would take a more than 20 percent hit, with cuts across the agency's missions. The Trump administration would have no new construction projects begun in 2019, instead focusing dollars on finishing projects already underway.

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Trump again calls for eliminating Chemical Safety Board [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 02/12/2018 12:45 PM EDT

The White House is again calling for eliminating the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, according to its latest budget proposal.

The budget puts the board, an independent agency charged with investigating accidents involving hazardous materials at refineries, on the "[major discretionary eliminations](#)" list.

The administration had called for the board's elimination in its budget plan last year, though Congress ignored the request and allowed it an \$11 million budget. Refinery owners and workers [criticized](#) the administration's move to phase out the CSB.

Past investigations include the 2015 explosion at the Exxon Mobil refinery in Torrance,

California, and the 2010 fire at a Tesoro refinery in Washington state that led to seven fatalities.

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NRC asks for Yucca funds and staff cuts [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 02/12/2018 01:36 PM EDT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission wants \$971 million for fiscal 2019, an increase of about \$60 million, compared to current funding levels, the agency says. But regulators are also hoping to slash the number of jobs by 149, a 4 percent cut.

NRC [budget documents](#) released today indicate that most of the requested increase, \$47.7 million, is being sought for the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project, which Congress has yet to fund under the Trump administration. Regulators envision 124 "full-time equivalent" employees working on the Yucca licensing effort.

The other large increase is for nuclear reactor safety, where the [agency says](#) the extra funds will be put toward the development of accident-tolerant fuel, a novel application for a second 20-year license extension and increased "risk-informed" licensing activities. Some of the funding needs were offset by sunseting agency work on post-Fukushima safety rules, a drop-off in the number of license renewals and the closure of the Fort Calhoun plant, the NRC says.

The NRC's reduction of 61 FTEs working in the New Reactors office is "primarily" due to SCANA's decision to abandon the Summer nuclear project, as well as "additional decreases due to the completion of work and declining workload."

The NRC, an independent agency, recovers about 90 percent of its budget through fees on the industries it regulates but needs Congress to approve the budget and the outstanding amount. Fees are expected to cover all but \$155.3 million in fiscal 2019. Agency fees cannot be used on Yucca Mountain.

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White House proposes big changes to speed environmental reviews for infrastructure [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 02/12/2018 11:31 AM EDT

The White House's [infrastructure package](#) includes measures designed to speed up environmental reviews, although many of the proposals would require congressional approval.

To meet President Donald Trump's desired two-year deadline to complete permits, the proposal would require lead agencies to finish their reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act within 21 months, and to finish issuing the necessary permits three months after that.

Other provisions in the proposal include:

- Requiring lead agencies to conduct a single review, with a single Record of Decision. Currently, agencies typically prepare separate NEPA documents.
- Allowing agencies to accept money from "non-federal entities" to support NEPA reviews. The proposal says it would include "appropriate controls for potential conflicts of interest."
- Eliminating Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, which requires EPA to review, comment on and rate other agencies' Environmental Impact Statements.
- Making it easier for agencies to classify projects as "categorical exclusions" and thus avoid an environmental review.
- Blocking agencies from being required to consider project alternatives "outside its authority or outside the capability of the applicant."
- Limiting agencies' comments on other reviews to their areas of expertise.
- Accelerating reviews for projects "that enhance the environment through mitigation, design or other means."
- Amending the Federal Power Act to require agencies to participate at FERC's request as a cooperating agency in its NEPA reviews, while still allowing the agencies to intervene later in the proceedings before FERC or in court.
- Directing the Council on Environmental Quality to update its NEPA regulations.

WHAT'S NEXT: The White House will transmit the proposal to Congress, which may consider some of the actions in a broader infrastructure spending bill.

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Zinke's agency held up Indians' casino after MGM lobbying [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano | 02/01/2018 05:00 AM EDT

Two casino-owning American Indian tribes are accusing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke of

illegally blocking their plans to expand operations in Connecticut — a delay that stands to benefit politically connected gambling giant MGM Resorts International.

The Interior Department's refusal to sign off on the tribes' plans for a third Connecticut casino came after Zinke and other senior department officials held numerous meetings and phone calls with MGM lobbyists and the company's Republican supporters in Congress, according to a POLITICO review of Zinke's schedule, lobbying registrations and other documents. The documents don't indicate whether they discussed the tribes' casino project.

Federal law gives Interior just 45 days to issue a yes-or-no verdict after a tribe submits proposed changes to its gaming compact with a state, as the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes note in a suit they filed against Zinke and the department. But the department declined to make any decision in this case, an inaction that raises questions about whether an intensive lobbying campaign by one of the gambling industry's biggest players muscled aside the interests of both the tribes and the state of Connecticut.

"I think the Department of Interior has been derelict in failing to give approval" to the tribes' request, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) told POLITICO. "We asked for a meeting, but they were unresponsive. They never even responded."

Meanwhile, MGM and its allies had direct access to Interior. Zinke had multiple conversations last year with Sen. Dean Heller and Rep. Mark Amodei — two Nevada Republicans whose state is a major center of employment for MGM, and who have each tried to impede the tribes' casino plans. The company also doubled its lobbying spending and assembled a team that includes Bush-era Interior Secretary Gale Norton and Florida-based Trump fundraiser Brian Ballard.

The proposed Connecticut casino would sit on non-tribal land just across the border from a billion-dollar casino that MGM is planning in Springfield, Massachusetts. The Pequot tribe's Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut previously provoked the ire of former New Jersey casino owner Donald Trump, who complained during a 1993 congressional hearing that "they don't look like Indians to me."

An Interior spokeswoman did not respond to requests for comment, but the department is due to respond by next week to the suit the tribes filed in November. MGM has sought to join the suit on Interior's side.

MGM and its supporters say the tribes are trying to circumvent restrictions on "off-reservation" gambling while still maintaining their exclusive access to Connecticut's lucrative casino market, and that the new property would provide unfair competition to its Springfield project.

Interior officials sent the tribes encouraging signals as recently as May. But by mid-September the department reversed course, saying it would be premature to either approve or reject the plans.

"It's 100 percent about delaying us for as long as they possibly can," said Andrew Doba, a spokesman for the joint enterprise the tribes created for their new project.

The case is far from the first legal dispute to arise from Interior's role as the overseer of Indian tribes' gambling agreements with the states. Clinton-era Secretary Bruce Babbitt faced a special prosecutors' investigation after Interior rejected three Wisconsin tribes' plans for a casino that other, Democrat-supporting tribes opposed — though he ultimately was cleared. Indian gambling also played a key role in the George W. Bush-era Jack Abramoff scandal.

In the Connecticut case, the tribes have been operating two casinos — the Pequot tribe's Foxwoods and the Mohegan Sun — since the early 1990s. Their success in the market between Boston and New York provided competition to casinos in Atlantic City, including the formerly Trump-owned Taj Mahal.

As gambling spread across the U.S. in recent decades, MGM and other casino developers — including Trump — pursued projects in Connecticut but were ultimately unsuccessful. State law there limits casino ownership to the two in-state tribes and their new joint venture.

The tribes say they are fully complying with state law and the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which allows federally recognized tribes to operate casinos on their reservations or lands held in trust by the federal government. The casino they want to open is technically a commercial project that would be operated by MMCT Venture, a company jointly owned by the tribes that owns the casino site in East Windsor and entered into a development agreement with the town.

Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy and the state legislature signed off on that arrangement last year, so long as the tribes agreed to amend their gaming compacts that guaranteed a certain share of slot revenues would go to the state. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires Interior to approve such compact amendments after a brief review window, unless the amendments violate the terms of the federal law.

The lawsuit seeks to force approval of the contract, arguing that the law does not allow Interior to refuse to render a verdict.

"IGRA and its implementing regulations leave the Secretary with no discretion to proceed in any other manner," Connecticut and the tribes argue in their lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on Nov. 29.

At one point, Interior seemed inclined to agree with the tribes' interpretation of the law. In a May 12 technical guidance letter to the tribes, Associate Deputy Interior Secretary James Cason acknowledged that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act provides for a 45-day review period for compact amendments and that the department may disapprove them only for violating the act, other federal laws or trust obligations to the tribes.

While Cason stressed that his advice was nonbinding and did not constitute a preliminary decision, he endorsed earlier guidance from the Obama administration that the Connecticut amendment reflected the "unique circumstances" at play and that opening a new casino would not affect the tribes' exclusivity agreement with the state.

But the tribes' request drew opposition from out-of-state lawmakers like Heller and Amodei.

"Under that framework, the tribes seek to expand off-reservation gaming without going through the procedures mandated by" the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, Amodei wrote in a July 28 letter to Cason, following up on a discussion earlier that day. Amodei asked whether Interior planned to allow the 45-day review period to lapse, which would allow the amendments to be "deemed approved."

Ultimately, Interior decided against approval. Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Michael Black told the tribes in a Sept. 15 letter that approving or disapproving the amendment to their gaming compact was "premature and likely unnecessary," and said Interior had "insufficient information" to make a decision. However, he did not cite any legal justification for that move, nor did he outline what additional information the department would need.

Interior has on at least one occasion returned a gaming compact amendment rather than make a yes-or-no decision, although the circumstances were slightly different at the time. In 2013, the department told the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribes in Oklahoma that it could not process their amendments because of incomplete information. But in that case, the department replied in less than 30 days rather than wait for the entire review period to elapse, and it cited specific regulations and outlined what additional information it needed from the tribes.

Black copied Amodei and Heller on his letter but did not include any Connecticut lawmakers. (He did say a separate letter was going to Malloy, the Connecticut governor.) Zinke and Heller also spoke on the phone on Sept. 15, according to an entry on Zinke's calendar. And the day before Black sent the letter, Zinke and Cason were scheduled to meet at the White House with deputy chief of staff Rick Dearborn, although Zinke's calendar does not list the subject of the meeting.

Ahead of the decision, MGM "participated in Interior's review" through meetings and correspondence in which the company urged Interior to either return the amendments without making a decision or to disapprove them for violating the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, according to a statement filed in court by Uri Clinton, MGM's senior vice president and legal counsel.

MGM brought on heavyweights including Norton — who disclosed her work for the company just last month — as well as Ballard, a lobbyist who has helped raise millions for Trump's campaign. MGM's spending on lobbyists for all issues more than doubled last year, to \$1.5 million spread across five outside firms and its own newly formed in-house team.

An affiliated company, MGM Public Policy LLC, also paid \$270,000 last year to hire a team of lobbyists from Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP to work on issues including gaming. That's the firm at which Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt worked until he joined the administration last year, though he has agreed to recuse himself from matters involving former clients of his firm without prior authorization.

"MGM Resorts last year established a public policy office in Washington to engage more directly on Federal legislative and policy issues," an MGM spokesman said in a statement. "Our advocacy activity reflected that increased engagement. As the largest employer in Nevada, part of that advocacy is routinely engaging our elected representatives."

Heller and Amodei each had multiple meetings and phone calls with Zinke last year, according to the secretary's calendar, although it's unclear whether they discussed the Connecticut casinos. On one occasion, Zinke joined Heller for dinner at a Las Vegas steakhouse on July 30, when he was in the state touring national monuments, one of several pieces of Interior's portfolio of interest to Nevada.

A Heller spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment. But the senator has tried to advance MGM's interests in the past: In 2016, he offered an amendment to a defense bill that would have prevented Indian tribes from operating commercial casinos in the same state where they operate casinos on the reservation — precisely what the Connecticut tribes are trying to do. The amendment never came to a vote, and Heller does not appear to have ever discussed it publicly.

MGM employees and the company's political action committee have given \$96,000 this cycle to Heller's reelection campaign and leadership PAC, making the company his largest single source of contributions, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Amodei has received no donations from company employees or its PAC.

Interior's Sept. 15 decision came two weeks after Zinke invited several lobbyists for MGM to join him and other guests for a social visit on his office balcony, which overlooks the National Mall. They included, according to Zinke's calendar, Ballard and other lobbyists from his firm Florida-based firm Ballard Partners, which opened its first Washington, D.C., office in 2017. Also present were Zinke's former family attorney and a major GOP fundraiser, according to copies of the secretary's calendar.

MGM hired Ballard in March and paid the firm \$270,000 last year, according to disclosure filings. Ballard was Florida finance chairman for Trump's 2016 campaign and helped organize a fundraiser at the Trump International Hotel in Washington last summer at which donors gave \$35,000 to attend or \$100,000 to join the host committee.

Ballard declined to discuss his work for MGM or any other client and said he could not recall the details of that particular meeting, which took place Aug. 29, according to Zinke's calendar. But Ballard said he had met Zinke and thinks "the world of him."

In October, MGM brought on Norton, who served as Interior secretary from 2001 to 2006, to lobby on issues related to the Connecticut tribes. Norton began lobbying for MGM on Oct. 25, according to disclosures filed Jan. 19.

The next day, Oct. 26, Interior officials spoke to the tribes and asked them to explain why the department was obligated to weigh in on their casino since it was being built by a commercial entity and not on tribal land.

In a brief interview last week, Norton said she did not know why her disclosure form was filed so late — lobbyists are required to file disclosures within 45 days — and she did not respond to follow-up inquiries.

Meanwhile, a new state legislative session begins in February in Connecticut. MGM plans to ask legislators there to allow an open bidding process for new casinos in the state, arguing that Interior's refusal to act shows that the state's attempt to limit casino ownership to the tribes would not work.

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Lawmakers want casino probe from Interior watchdog [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano | 02/12/2018 01:47 PM EDT

Connecticut lawmakers are asking the Interior Department's inspector general to launch an investigation into why a pair of Indian tribes are being prevented from opening a new casino in the state.

Interior has refused to sign off on an arrangement that would allow the new Connecticut casino to open within a deadline prescribed by federal law. The agency's inaction followed an intensive lobbying campaign from MGM Resorts International, which is opening a competing casino nearby. The state of Connecticut and Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes have already sued Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, and now several members of the state's congressional delegation want the IG to look into the process.

MGM and its allies had direct access to Zinke and other senior Interior officials in the months before Interior refused to sign off on the tribes' plan, and the company hired several well-connected lobbyists to push its case with the Trump administration, as [POLITICO reported this month](#). Sens. [Richard Blumenthal](#) and [Chris Murphy](#) and Reps. [John Larson](#) and [Joe Courtney](#), all Democrats, cite that article in their request for an investigation.

The Connecticut lawmakers, meanwhile, have said they were shut out of the process. In their letter, they point out that MGM "has no connection to the legal trust responsibility Interior has to the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot Tribes" and its "activities should have had no bearing on" Interior's decision.

"These actions suggest that something other than the legal obligations to Indian Tribes was motivating the decision of the Department of the Interior," the lawmakers write.

The lawmakers also point out that Interior had not identified any problems with the tribes' plan in earlier guidance letters from both the Trump and Obama administrations.

"Interior's subversion of its own guidance — after multiple interventions by parties with no apparent connection to the Interior's legal trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes — may suggest the department abrogated its duty to properly carry out its legal trust responsibilities regarding the two Tribes," the lawmakers wrote.

In a court filing last week, Zinke sought to dismiss claims brought by the Mashantucket Pequot tribe, saying their state-tribal gaming compact fell under a different section of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act than those the department is required to review within 45 days. But he did not address the claims from the state or the Mohegan Tribe, and the department has never publicly explained the reasoning behind its decision.

An Interior spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

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Interior adds 3 months to BOEM-BSEE merger study [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 02/12/2018 01:56 PM EDT

Interior hopes to decide in 90 days whether to merge the agency responsible for awarding oil and gas leases on federal waters with another agency responsible for offshore drilling safety, Secretary Ryan Zinke said.

That timetable delays a decision on merging the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement that was first floated last May. Zinke had said in September he had expected the completion of a study in two months on whether to combine the two agencies, which had been separated in 2010 after a series of scandals related to Interior's energy leasing and safety management.

"If we combine them, what are the unintended consequences?" Zinke said during a call with reporters about the latest White House budget proposal. "The last thing we need is to reduce safety and reliability. We should know in about 90 days where we sit."

The decision is part of Interior's wider push to increase energy production in federal waters. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will hold an offshore lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico next month, and Zinke said the department would reach out to state governments about promoting more renewable energy projects in federal waters.

"There's opportunity for offshore wind," Zinke said during the call. "As state legislatures green their portfolio, we want to work with local and state communities and stakeholders."

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The mysterious oppo researcher working in the White House lawyer's office [Back](#)

By Nancy Cook | 02/11/2018 06:04 PM EDT

Few people in or close to the White House have any idea what Michael Roman does all day.

Officially, Roman works as a special assistant to the president and director of special projects and research, a vague title that reveals almost nothing. He earns \$115,000 a year for this work, according to White House salary records, and keeps an office inside the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

He reports to White House counsel Don McGahn, who represented the conservative Koch network as a lawyer during the period when Roman was working for the Kochs' Freedom Partners group as [head of research](#) — a \$269,000-a-year job that involved tracking the activities of Democratic political organizers and donors.

Roman, whose 25-person intelligence-gathering unit was officially disbanded by the Kochs in 2016, was hired by Donald Trump's campaign to oversee poll-watching in the final weeks before the election and was among a handful of unannounced hires who quietly joined the White House soon after Trump's inauguration.

He's not involved in the kind of advance work that researchers hired by previous administrations have handled, according to interviews with half a dozen current and former White House officials and advisers.

Some said Roman is vetting special appointees by checking their social media footprints and financial backgrounds. A handful of people described Roman as McGahn's researcher, while one described him as a "loyal soldier" to McGahn. Another characterized his work in the office as opposition research, but could not specify what precisely that entailed. One White House official said he was heavily involved in extensively researching the background of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, who was selected a year ago.

"Within the research world, he cultivates this 'man of the world' mystery," said one former administration official. "Like, he was the guy who you would talk to if you want to find a Hungarian hacker in Hong Kong."

Roman, McGahn and a White House spokesman did not respond to requests for comment.

Early in his career, Roman did political consulting work in New Jersey and his home state of Pennsylvania, as well as stints at the Republican National Committee and on the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush, Rudy Giuliani and Sen. John McCain.

On his blog, called Election Journal, Roman describes himself as a "veteran political consultant and private investigator."

People who have known Roman professionally dating back to his work for Bush's campaign describe him as a seasoned operative and die-hard Philadelphia Eagles fan, with a blue-collar upbringing.

"I've known him for 15 years. This is a guy you want on your side when you're in a tough election," said Mike DuHaime, a partner at Mercury and former political director for the RNC. "He does not back down from a challenge. I'm sure the Trump campaign saw that when not a lot of people would support the candidate."

In much of his political work before joining the Koch network, Roman worked on boosting voter turnout and coordinating with state Republican Party leaders, DuHaime said.

On Election Day, Roman was stationed in Pennsylvania, his beloved home state. He also oversaw the campaign's "election integrity" efforts across the country.

One Republican strategist close to the administration said Roman acted during the transition as a manager to help McGahn with his incoming team of lawyers, many of whom came from McGahn's former firm Jones Day.

"That was a big priority and focus of Don McGahn," said the strategist. "Roman played an important role during the transition for whatever came up for Don."

Past administrations have also employed people with opposition research and investigative experience. But such dirt-digging operatives have typically not been installed inside the White House counsel's office among the lawyers, who tackle everything from White House ethics to national security decisions to general legal advice to protect the institution of the presidency.

Rather, those positions typically are housed within the advance or scheduling offices to vet the hundreds of people who appear alongside the president during speeches, roundtables or factory visits.

"It was standard vetting to protect the office of the president and office of the vice president," said Jeff Berkowitz, former associate director of scheduling research under President George W. Bush. "You can't have a person on the stage with the president, in the age of Google, who has not paid his back taxes."

Berkowitz added that his office also worked with the press shop and White House counsel's team to vet greeters, event participants and requests for the first lady to be honorary chairs for groups and events.

The Obama White House did not employ high-level nonlawyers in its counsel's office, said Norm Eisen, White House special counsel for ethics under President Barack Obama. The nonlawyers in that office during that administration were very junior fact-checkers, akin to

paralegals, Eisen added.

Roman briefly cultivated a public profile, writing occasional bylined pieces from 2009 through 2011 for Breitbart News on topics ranging from alleged voter fraud in Pennsylvania and New York to the Department of Justice's handling of the New Black Panther Party to a hit piece on Democratic Rep. John Adler.

Election monitoring, concerns about voter fraud and Election Day poll monitoring have long been a passion of Roman's and the primary focus of his blog, with entries dating as far back as 2008. "If an election is worth winning, then there is someone willing to steal it," Roman wrote in one introductory post.

Roman also attracted notice a decade ago for disseminating a 2008 YouTube video showing two members of the New Black Panther Party, dressed in black with berets and one carrying a nightstick, milling around a North Philadelphia polling station — a video that ended up being played on a loop on the Fox News Network that year, personifying conservative fears about voter intimidation.

"The video was certainly used by political operatives to create this false impression of voter intimidation and fraud being a major problem," said Rick Hasen, a professor who specializes in election law at the University of California, Irvine, School of Law. "Even today, people will say, 'What about the New Black Panthers?' They really are a nonentity."

Eliana Johnson contributed to this report.

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White House officials: Talk of Trump replacing Kelly 'much ado about nothing' [Back](#)

By Victoria Guida | 02/11/2018 09:37 AM EDT

Three leading Trump administration figures said Sunday that chief of staff John Kelly is not going anywhere.

Budget director Mick Mulvaney, adviser Kellyanne Conway and director of legislative affairs Marc Short all responded to questions on Sunday morning shows by saying they saw no indication that Kelly is about to leave his position at the White House. Kelly has most recently faced backlash after revelations that he failed to remove Rob Porter, an aide accused of domestic abuse, until the news about Porter was reported in the press.

Mulvaney said he has "absolutely not" been approached about replacing John Kelly as President Donald Trump's chief of staff. "I think all the stories about replacing Gen. Kelly are from people who are unhappy they've lost access to the president," Mulvaney told Chris Wallace on "Fox

News Sunday."

"It's much ado about nothing," Mulvaney said.

Mulvaney said it was a "very human reaction" for Trump and Kelly to initially give Porter the benefit of the doubt.

"As soon as Rob Porter was proven wrong, it was proven he was not telling the truth when the photos came out on Wednesday, he was gone almost immediately," he said. Photographs were published of one of Porter's ex-wives with a bruised eye.

Mulvaney also suggested that a tweet Saturday in which Trump wrote "Lives are being shattered and destroyed by a mere allegation" was actually a reference to businessman and former Republican National Committee finance chairman Steve Wynn. The casino magnate resigned from the RNC on Jan. 27 after harassment allegations against him were reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Wynn "has been accused and has been condemned without any due process," Mulvaney said.

Speaking on ABC's "This Week," Conway said the president has "full confidence" in Kelly.

"I spoke with the president last night about this very issue," she said, "and he wanted me to reemphasize to everyone, including this morning, that he has full confidence in his current chief of staff Gen. John Kelly, and that he is not actively searching for replacements."

She also said the allegations about Porter were startling but that his departure was necessary.

"This is not the Rob Porter any of us have worked with," she said, adding: "We are a nation of laws, we are a nation of due process, and all sides should be heard out. But you also can't ignore what you see in front of you."

On NBC's "Meet the Press," Short said Kelly "has not offered his resignation."

"Gen. Kelly, in my mind, is an American hero," Short told Chuck Todd. "There's few families in America that have sacrificed more for our country. John Kelly knows that he serves at the pleasure of the president, and he will step aside as soon as — anytime the president doesn't want him to be there. But John Kelly has not offered his resignation."

Like Conway, Short said the White House was startled by the news about Porter.

"When you've been working with somebody for a year," Short said, "your first instinct is to say that doesn't match up with the person I know inside our office. But that doesn't mean that once you learn that actual extent of the allegations, that you have any tolerance for it. And Gen. Kelly had no tolerance for it."

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From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 2:58:49 PM
Subject: RE: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

Handling.

From: Kevin Bogardus [mailto:kbogardus@eenews.net]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

Hey everyone,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

I'm working on a piece about Definers Corp.'s contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>). I had a few questions about this, which are:

-- How did this contract happen? Did Definers approach EPA first or did EPA approach Definers first?

-- What services will Definers be providing EPA? Will Definers be providing "war room" services to EPA (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3d6ea3_c21da991906e440eba09e35b63bbcc10.pdf)?

-- A search of [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) shows that Definers' contract with EPA is Definers' first contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/AdvancedSearch.aspx?sub=y&ST=C&FY=2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011>). Is that accurate?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Also, since I'm working from home today, please email me here or call my cell phone at 202-247-7844. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Tue 9/26/2017 5:41:38 PM
Subject: UPDATED DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2017

**UPDATED DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017**

UPDATE: *There will be a Principals meeting on hurricane relief and recovery efforts at 2:30PM.*

In the morning, President Donald J. Trump will receive his daily intelligence briefing. The President will then meet with bipartisan representation from the House Committee on Ways and Means. Later in the morning, the President will receive a briefing on hurricane recovery efforts. In the afternoon, the President will meet with President Mariano Rajoy of Spain, and, after a working luncheon with him, the two leaders will hold a joint press conference. The President will then depart the White House for Joint Base Andrews, en route to New York, NY. In New York, the President will participate in a U.S. Mission greeting. The President will then meet with the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee (RNC). In the evening, the President will participate in a roundtable with RNC supporters. The President will then give remarks at the RNC finance dinner. Later in the evening, the President will depart New York, NY for Washington, D.C., en route to the White House.

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: ABC

Print: The Hill

Radio: AURN

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: ABC

Print: Washington Post

Radio: NY Times

EDT

9:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

10:00AM THE PRESIDENT receives his daily intelligence briefing

Oval Office

Closed Press

**10:30AM THE PRESIDENT meets with bipartisan members of the
House Committee on Ways and Means**

Roosevelt Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 10:20AM – Briefing Room Doors)

**11:30AM THE PRESIDENT receives a briefing on hurricane recovery
efforts**

White House Situation Room

Closed Press

**12:15PM THE PRESIDENT welcomes President Mariano Rajoy of
Spain**

Stakeout

Open Press

12:20PM THE PRESIDENT meets with President Rajoy

Oval Office

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 12:10PM – Briefing Room Doors)

**12:35PM THE PRESIDENT has a working luncheon with President
Rajoy**

Cabinet Room

Closed Press

1:15PM Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time

Joint Base Andrews

Virginia Gate

1:45PM **THE PRESIDENT holds a joint press conference with President Rajoy**

Rose Garden

Pre-Credentialed Media

2:30PM **Principals meeting on hurricane relief and recovery efforts**

White House Situation Room

Closed Press

3:00PM **THE PRESIDENT departs the White House en route to Joint Base Andrews**

South Lawn

Open Press

3:20PM **THE PRESIDENT departs Washington, D.C. en route to New York, NY**

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:10PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in New York, NY

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

**4:20PM THE PRESIDENT departs John F. Kennedy International
Airport en route to Wall Street Landing Zone**

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

4:40PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the Wall Street Landing Zone

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

5:10PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a U.S. Mission greeting

United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Closed Press

**6:05PM THE PRESIDENT meets with the Chairwoman of the
Republican National Committee (RNC)**

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

**6:35PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a roundtable with RNC
supporters**

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

7:45PM THE PRESIDENT gives remarks at the RNC finance dinner

Le Cirque Restaurant

Closed Press

8:55PM THE PRESIDENT departs Wall Street Landing Zone en route to John F. Kennedy International Airport

Wall Street Landing Zone

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

9:25PM THE PRESIDENT departs New York, NY en route to Washington, D.C.

John F. Kennedy International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:20PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in Washington, D.C.

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:40PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Lawn

Open Press

###

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To: Hupp, Millan[hupp.millan@epa.gov]; Hupp, Sydney[hupp.sydney@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]
Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Wed 5/17/2017 9:37:05 PM
Subject: EPA News Highlights for 5/17
[05.17.2017 EPA News Highlights.docx](#)

Good evening – Attached and below are today’s news highlights for the Administrator.

EPA News Highlights 5/17/2017

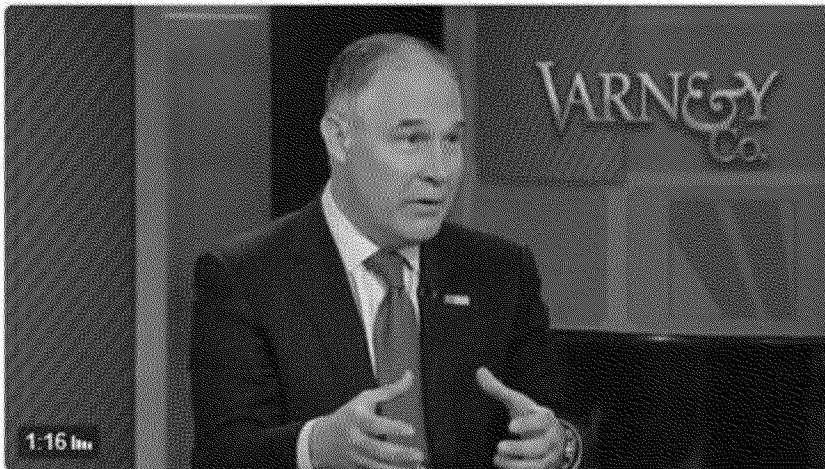
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@EPAScottPruitt has recently said that #Obama was "no environmental savior."
Here's why:



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EPA Administrator @ScottPruittOK joined us on @foxandfriends to talk about his plan to create clean energy



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6:57 AM · 17 May 2017

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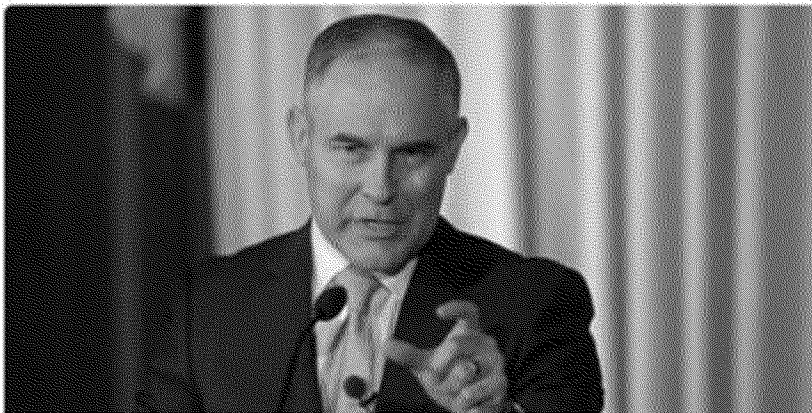
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EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America last



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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn't the environm...
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Need to Know Network: EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Scott Pruitt**, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday. Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the **EPA** has been slow to respond, citing "a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the **EPA** 27 years to make a decision."

Fox Business: EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a "bad business deal." "Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn't take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period," he said.

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E&E News: Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said... Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

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Need to Know Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/epa-administrator-promises-to-clean-up-toxic-waste-sites-obama-left-behind/>

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5/17/17, 11:45AM

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"I think when you look at the environmental left, they look at the past administration as an environmental savior," Pruitt told *Fox and Friends*.

"This president is a doer, he's an action-oriented leader," Pruitt said. "The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually doing things to clean up the environment."

Pruitt noted that nearly 40 percent of the country, roughly 120 million Americans, is living in areas that don't meet air quality standards. Fox News' Ainsley Earhardt asked Pruitt if people

living near these sites could get cancer if they are exposed to chemical around these sites.

“Quite possibly, yes,” Pruitt responded. “That’s why it’s so important to focus the core of the mission on those areas.”

Fox News’ Steve Doocy asked Pruitt how much this cleanup would cost the American taxpayers.

“The great thing about this is we have private funding. There are people out there responsible for these sites to clean up,” Pruitt said, noting that the money is there to clean up these toxic waste sites.

“It’s not a matter of money,” he said. “It’s a matter of leadership and attitude and management, and we need to do it much better.”

Fox Business

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/2017/05/17/will-trump-controversies-stall-epa-s-aggressive-agenda.html>

EPA’s Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

By Nick Giampia 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn’t the environmental “savior” that Democrats made him out to be and why the U.S. needs to part ways with the Paris Climate Agreement.

“When you look at Superfund sites, which are sites across the country that have land waste Uranium and Lead 1322 sites across the country that’s more than when President Obama came into office, so it increased under his watch... The areas that he focused on as far as CO2, he struck out twice before the U.S. Supreme Court, they struck him down as far as the actions he

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Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a “bad business deal.”

“Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn’t take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period,” he said.

Washington Times

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/17/scott-pruitt-paris-agreement-decision-come-after-d/>

Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump’s G-7 visit

By Sally Persons 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit.

“I think probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I’m actually attending the G-7 in early June, there will be a decision on Paris. Very important that we make steps there soon,” Mr. Pruitt said on Fox News.

Mr. Trump is set to meet with the G-7 May 26-27.

The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Pruitt said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site

was unacceptable.

“We’re very focused on West Lake,” he said. “We have a plan in place that we’re going to announce very soon on West Lake.”

Mr. Pruitt also said the cleanup will be funded primarily by private funds dedicated to cleaning up these sites.

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/scott-pruitt-epa-trump-paris-climate/2017/05/17/id/790624/>

Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

By Sandy Fitzgerald | Wednesday, 17 May 2017 09:04 AM

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, EPA Director Scott Pruitt said Wednesday.

"It's very important we make decisions there soon," Pruitt told Fox News' "Fox & Friends" program, indicating the announcement will likely come in early June.

Trump promised during his presidential campaign to pull the United States out of the U.N. accord, which was reached in 2015 to combat climate change. If the United States leaves the agreement, it will join just two other countries — Syria and Nicaragua — in being off the list, The Washington Post reports.

Meanwhile, Pruitt said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the EPA did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

"[There is] a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision," said Pruitt. "Not to clean it up, but to make a decision on what should be done to clean it up."

In addition, "almost 40 percent of the country" has areas that don't meet federal air quality standards, affecting some 120 million people, said Pruitt.

"We had Gold King in Colorado, Flint in Michigan with water, Superfund sites across the country," said Pruitt. "We are very focused on East Chicago, a site that has lead."

Pruitt said that while much of the talk in Washington now surrounds the president's controversies with the FBI, Trump is "providing leadership in so many areas, but it gets lost in the Washington D.C. malaise."

Meanwhile, taking decades to make a decision is "unacceptable," said Pruitt. "Get St. Louis cleaned up."

There is funding available for the cleanup efforts, said Pruitt, and there are people responsible for getting the work done.

"It's not a matter of money," he said. "It's a matter of leadership and attitude and management. We need to do it much better."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/05/17/stories/1060054672>

Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

By Kevin Bogardus 5/17/17

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said today that the Trump administration will decide on whether to remain in or withdraw from the Paris accords after this month's meeting of world powers.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" this morning, Pruitt said President Trump will likely make a decision on the climate change agreement after the Group of Seven summit.

"I think that probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June as well, there will be a decision on Paris," Pruitt said. "Very important that we make steps there soon."

As a candidate, Trump pledged to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, but so far his administration has yet to take action. The White House said originally that Trump would decide before the G-7 summit, but that decision has since been pushed back.

Pruitt is one of the voices in the administration arguing for an exit from the climate change deal, but others have advocated staying in the agreement in an attempt to modify its terms.

Asked whether the American public needs to focus on safety and jobs, not "memos and what's happening in the White House" — in reference to allegations that Trump interfered with the FBI investigation of Mike Flynn, his former national security adviser — the EPA chief said the president has shown leadership.

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said.

Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program

and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

"The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually taking steps to do things to clean up the environment," Pruitt said.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/05/17/stories/1060054709>

GOP attorneys general pan 20 EPA rules

By Sean Reilly 5/17/17

A group of Republican attorneys general are urging the Trump administration to target the Clean Power Plan and a host of other U.S. EPA air quality rules for possible changes or elimination in the course of a broader review.

"During the Obama administration, we experienced first-hand the devastating effects of unlawful executive overreach on jobs and our states' local energy economies," West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey (R) and seven other attorneys general wrote this week in comments for an EPA "regulatory reform" task force.

Their letter, addressed to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, asks him to consider 20 rules for "repeal, replacement or modification." Besides the Clean Power Plan, intended to reduce electricity producers' emissions of greenhouse gases, the list includes EPA's 2015 standard for ground-level ozone, the update to the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, and recent changes to the agency's program to reduce regional haze at national parks and wilderness areas. It also asks the agency to reconsider its Clean Water Act jurisdiction rule.

"We welcome the opportunity to participate in the process of scaling back these unlawful regulations, restoring the rule of law, and ultimately returning key decisions about energy production and priorities to the states and their citizens," the letter adds. The signers include Mike Hunter (R), who was appointed to succeed Pruitt as Oklahoma's attorney general.

The letter is among more than 60,000 comments so far posted on Regulations.gov in response to President Trump's March executive order requiring EPA and other agencies to identify regulations that get in the way of job creation, have compliance costs that outweigh benefits or are otherwise "outdated, unnecessary or ineffective."

Pruitt has since created a four-person EPA task force headed by his chief of staff, Ryan Jackson, to spearhead the agency's efforts; by this Monday, all of EPA's major branches, including the Office of Air and Radiation, were supposed to have submitted recommendations to the task force. Already, the agency has indefinitely frozen litigation surrounding the 2015 ozone standard and other regulations while reconsidering whether to keep defending them. Monday was also the deadline for public comments, which were still being posted on Regulations.gov today.

Rather than proposing specific rules for the chopping block, however, thousands of individuals have appealed to Pruitt to leave existing air and water rules untouched or instead make them tougher (*Climatewire*, May 17). One rural Minnesota resident, for example, urged EPA to consider further tightening the 70-parts-per-billion ozone standard; another recalled the New York City metropolitan area's "horrendous" air quality decades ago and called it a sin to abandon the regulations that had cleaned it up.

Environmental and public health groups have also weighed in. The National Parks Conservation Association credited the regional haze program for adding 30 miles of visibility on average to Western areas like the John Muir Wilderness in California. The executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility wrote that the Clean Air Act prevents 160,000 premature deaths each year.

Not filing comments was the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, whose members include 40 state regulatory agencies. But the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, a Kentucky-based coalition whose 20 member states are concentrated in the South and West, singled out aspects of some 30 regulations and policies as warranting evaluation. They ranged from the "limited regulatory relief" available for controlling ozone concentrations that originate outside a state's boundaries to auditing and reporting requirements for vehicle emissions

inspection programs, which the group called "unnecessarily burdensome."

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/05/senate-gop-starts-regulatory-revamp-push-today-022867>

BARRASSO: PRUITT 'VERY RESPONSIVE'

By Anthony Adragna 5/17/17

AT LEAST 110 STAFFERS ON EPA COAL JOBS REPORT: EPA has tasked at least 110 employees with work studying the impact of agency regulations and actions on the coal industry, the agency revealed in a court [filing](#) Tuesday. A federal judge last fall sided with Murray Energy in a lawsuit arguing EPA had neglected part of the Clean Air Act requiring it to study how its actions affect employment. The 4th Circuit heard EPA's appeal last week and has not yet issued a ruling. But in the meantime, the lower court judge ordered EPA to have a report covering air rules issued since 2009 ready by July 1, a time frame EPA said has required a pull-out-all-the-stops effort.

EPA has assigned 80 economists, policy experts, attorneys and compliance officials with compiling and studying the necessary data on jobs at coal mines and coal-burning power plants, which is pulled from sources like DOE, FERC, the Labor Department and even the CDC. Another 30 workers have been assigned to set up a long-term plan to continuously study employment impacts, including a better system to collect the granular data required, a process that would include significant public input.

GETTING BY WITH HELP FROM HIS (FOX AND) FRIENDS: Pruitt's streak of softball interviews continues today with two appearances this morning on Fox-based programming. First, he's up on Fox News "[Fox and Friends](#)" at 6:40 a.m. and then he heads over to the Fox Business Network for "[Varney & Co.](#)" at 9:15 a.m. That follows [an interview](#) he gave to a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association writer published Tuesday.

BARRASSO: PRUITT 'VERY RESPONSIVE': Senate EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) told ME Tuesday that Pruitt has been "very responsive" to oversight requests from his office. "We've

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Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/05/carper-slams-pruitt-over-inadequate-answers-on-climate-plans-087872>

Carper slams Pruitt over inadequate answers on climate plans

By Anthony Adragna 5/17/17

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt responded to a letter from nearly two dozen Senate Democrats seeking details on his plans to review the Clean Power Plan with little more than copies of two press releases and a publicly available letter, drawing a sharp rebuke from Sen. Tom Carper.

"Either Mr. Pruitt mistakenly believes that forwarding past press releases is a sufficient response or he doesn't have a plan to protect Americans from greenhouse gas emissions," Carper, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, told POLITICO in a statement accompanying a copy of Pruitt's response.

"The job of the EPA is to protect public health and the environment," Carper added. "To Mr. Pruitt, I say do your job."

In their original April 7 letter, 23 Senate Democrats asked Pruitt to explain how he'd go about dismantling the Clean Power Plan and what kind of rule he would put in its place, given the agency's obligation to regulate greenhouse gases. They also asked for copies of all documents "related to any decision you take in EPA's review or under the Executive Order with respect to the Clean Power Plan."

That letter further asked Pruitt for the scientific sources he used as the basis for his (false) conclusion during a March television appearance that carbon dioxide is not the primary driver of global warming. Pruitt's response included a paragraph explaining President Donald Trump's late March executive order and nothing more of substance.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA is reviewing the Clean Power Plan to decide whether to suspend, revise or rescind the rule.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/17/rep-hunter-sewage-spilling-into-the-us-from-mexico-is-making-our-border-patrol-agents-sick/>

Rep. Hunter: Sewage spilling into the US from Mexico is making our border patrol agents sick

By Jonah Bennett 5/17.17

GOP California Rep. Duncan Hunter wrote a letter in May to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and head of the EPA Scott Pruitt, urging the two to take action on the sewage spill in Tijuana that is pouring into the U.S. and apparently making Border Patrol agents ill.

Hunter drew attention to the massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River that is still moving through San Diego County, and in the letter sent May 9, he noted that it's important to bring attention to the affects on Border Patrol agents and Navy SEAL members, not just the environmental impact of the spill.

“Compounding the environmental, economic and public health ramifications, it is imperative to highlight the negative impact this situation is having on our military and border enforcement personnel,” Hunter wrote in a letter obtained by The Daily Caller News Foundation. “Individuals with the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Navy SEAL teams perform their responsibilities throughout

this area on a daily basis. The current spill, as indicated in the pictures I've enclosed, is significant and has increased their risk for exposure to a multitude of diseases and pollutants.”

“I have personally received reports of Border Patrol agents falling ill, being forced to leave their shifts and seek medical attention, possibly even putting their families at risk when these agents return home following events of exposure,” Hunter continued. “Additionally, I am aware of critical military operations and exercises in the area being suspended because of the harmful conditions and risk the current spill poses.”

For Hunter, the sewage seeping into the U.S. represents a drop in national security because of suspended military exercises.

The February sewage incident in Mexico occurred because of the collapse of a major sewage trunk line, and Hunter claims that Mexico is barely doing anything to clean up the mess in the aftermath. Moreover, Mexican officials never even informed the U.S. of the spill. At least 28 million gallons of raw sewage flowed into the Tijuana River earlier this year, but in actuality, that amount could be as high as 256 million gallons.

As such, Hunter wants the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency directly involved in “resolving this situation,” as the International Boundary and Water Commission effort is insufficient.

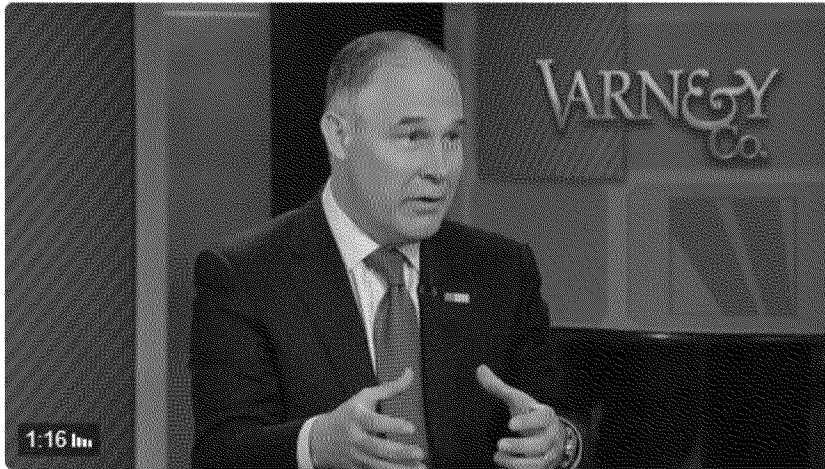
EPA News Highlights 5/17/2017

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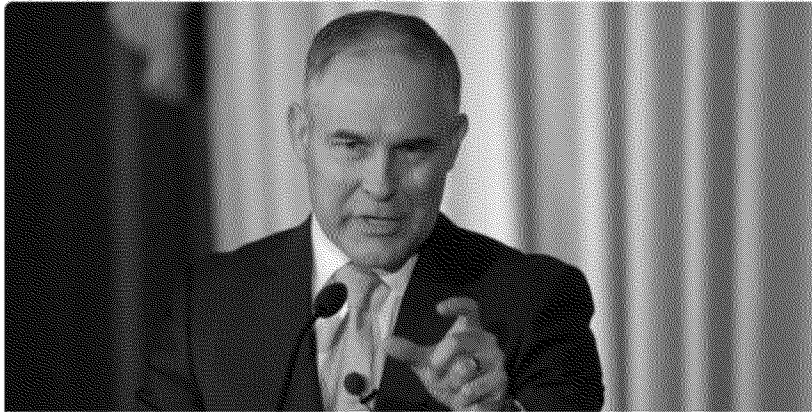
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Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump's G-7 visit

By Sally Persons 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit.

"I think probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June, there will be a decision on Paris. Very important that we make steps there soon," Mr. Pruitt said on Fox News.

Mr. Trump is set to meet with the G-7 May 26-27.

The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Pruitt said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site was unacceptable.

"We're very focused on West Lake," he said. "We have a plan in place that we're going to announce very soon on West Lake."

Mr. Pruitt also said the cleanup will be funded primarily by private funds dedicated to cleaning up these sites.

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/scott-pruitt-epa-trump-paris-climate/2017/05/17/id/790624/>

Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

By Sandy Fitzgerald | Wednesday, 17 May 2017 09:04 AM

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, EPA Director Scott Pruitt said Wednesday.

"It's very important we make decisions there soon," Pruitt told Fox News' "Fox & Friends" program, indicating the announcement will likely come in early June.

Trump promised during his presidential campaign to pull the United States out of the U.N. accord, which was reached in 2015 to combat climate change. If the United States leaves the agreement, it will join just two other countries — Syria and Nicaragua — in being off the list, The Washington Post reports.

Meanwhile, Pruitt said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the EPA did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

"[There is] a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision," said Pruitt. "Not to clean it up, but to make a decision on what should be done to clean it up."

In addition, "almost 40 percent of the country" has areas that don't meet federal air quality standards, affecting some 120 million people, said Pruitt.

"We had Gold King in Colorado, Flint in Michigan with water, Superfund sites across the country," said Pruitt. "We are very focused on East Chicago, a site that has lead."

Pruitt said that while much of the talk in Washington now surrounds the president's controversies with the FBI, Trump is "providing leadership in so many areas, but it gets lost in the Washington D.C. malaise."

Meanwhile, taking decades to make a decision is "unacceptable," said Pruitt. "Get St. Louis cleaned up."

There is funding available for the cleanup efforts, said Pruitt, and there are people responsible for getting the work done.

"It's not a matter of money," he said. "It's a matter of leadership and attitude and management. We need to do it much better."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/05/17/stories/1060054672>

Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

By Kevin Bogardus 5/17/17

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said today that the Trump administration will decide on whether to remain in or withdraw from the Paris accords after this month's meeting of world powers.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" this morning, Pruitt said President Trump will likely make a decision on the climate change agreement after the Group of Seven summit.

"I think that probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June as well, there will be a decision on Paris," Pruitt said. "Very important that we make steps there soon."

As a candidate, Trump pledged to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, but so far his administration has yet to take action. The White House said originally that Trump would decide before the G-7 summit, but that decision has since been pushed back.

Pruitt is one of the voices in the administration arguing for an exit from the climate change deal, but others have advocated staying in the agreement in an attempt to modify its terms.

Asked whether the American public needs to focus on safety and jobs, not "memos and what's happening in the White House" — in reference to allegations that Trump interfered with the FBI investigation of Mike Flynn, his former national security adviser — the EPA chief said the president has shown leadership.

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said.

Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

"The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually taking steps to do things to clean up the environment," Pruitt said.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/05/17/stories/1060054709>

GOP attorneys general pan 20 EPA rules

By Sean Reilly 5/17/17

A group of Republican attorneys general are urging the Trump administration to target the Clean Power Plan and a host of other U.S. EPA air quality rules for possible changes or elimination in the course of a broader review.

"During the Obama administration, we experienced first-hand the devastating effects of unlawful executive overreach on jobs and our states' local energy economies," West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey (R) and seven other attorneys general wrote this week in comments for an EPA "regulatory reform" task force.

Their letter, addressed to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, asks him to consider 20 rules for "repeal, replacement or modification." Besides the Clean Power Plan, intended to reduce electricity producers' emissions of greenhouse gases, the list includes EPA's 2015 standard for ground-level ozone, the update to the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, and recent changes to the agency's program to reduce regional haze at national parks and wilderness areas. It also asks the agency to reconsider its Clean Water Act jurisdiction rule.

"We welcome the opportunity to participate in the process of scaling back these unlawful regulations, restoring the rule of law, and ultimately returning key decisions about energy production and priorities to the states and their citizens," the letter adds. The signers include Mike Hunter (R), who was appointed to succeed Pruitt as Oklahoma's attorney general.

The letter is among more than 60,000 comments so far posted on Regulations.gov in response to President Trump's March executive order requiring EPA and other agencies to identify regulations that get in the way of job creation, have compliance costs that outweigh benefits or are otherwise "outdated, unnecessary or ineffective."

Pruitt has since created a four-person EPA task force headed by his chief of staff, Ryan Jackson, to spearhead the agency's efforts; by this Monday, all of EPA's major branches, including the Office of Air and Radiation, were supposed to have submitted recommendations to the task force. Already, the agency has indefinitely frozen litigation surrounding the 2015 ozone standard and other regulations while reconsidering whether to keep defending them. Monday was also the deadline for public comments, which were still being posted on Regulations.gov today.

Rather than proposing specific rules for the chopping block, however, thousands of individuals have appealed to Pruitt to leave existing air and water rules untouched or instead make them tougher (*Climatewire*, May 17). One rural Minnesota resident, for example, urged EPA to consider further tightening the 70-parts-per-billion ozone standard; another recalled the New York City metropolitan area's "horrendous" air quality decades ago and called it a sin to abandon the regulations that had cleaned it up.

Environmental and public health groups have also weighed in. The National Parks Conservation Association credited the regional haze program for adding 30 miles of visibility on average to Western areas like the John Muir Wilderness in California. The executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility wrote that the Clean Air Act prevents 160,000 premature deaths each year.

Not filing comments was the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, whose members include 40 state regulatory agencies. But the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, a Kentucky-based coalition whose 20 member states are concentrated in the South and West, singled out aspects of some 30 regulations and policies as warranting evaluation. They ranged from the "limited regulatory relief" available for controlling ozone concentrations that originate outside a state's boundaries to auditing and reporting requirements for vehicle emissions inspection programs, which the group called "unnecessarily burdensome."

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/05/senate-gop-starts-regulatory-revamp-push-today-022867>

BARRASSO: PRUITT 'VERY RESPONSIVE'

By Anthony Adragna 5/17/17

AT LEAST 110 STAFFERS ON EPA COAL JOBS REPORT: EPA has tasked at least 110 employees with work studying the impact of agency regulations and actions on the coal industry, the agency revealed in a court filing Tuesday. A federal judge last fall sided with Murray Energy in a lawsuit arguing EPA had neglected part of the Clean Air Act requiring it to study how its actions affect employment. The 4th Circuit heard EPA's appeal last week and has not yet issued a ruling. But in the meantime, the lower court judge ordered EPA to have a report covering air rules issued since 2009 ready by July 1, a time frame EPA said has required a pull-out-all-the-stops effort.

EPA has assigned 80 economists, policy experts, attorneys and compliance officials with compiling and studying the necessary data on jobs at coal mines and coal-burning power plants, which is pulled from

sources like DOE, FERC, the Labor Department and even the CDC. Another 30 workers have been assigned to set up a long-term plan to continuously study employment impacts, including a better system to collect the granular data required, a process that would include significant public input.

GETTING BY WITH HELP FROM HIS (FOX AND) FRIENDS: Pruitt's streak of softball interviews continues today with two appearances this morning on Fox-based programming. First, he's up on Fox News "[Fox and Friends](#)" at 6:40 a.m. and then he heads over to the Fox Business Network for "[Varney & Co.](#)" at 9:15 a.m. That follows [an interview](#) he gave to a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association writer published Tuesday.

BARRASSO: PRUITT 'VERY RESPONSIVE': Senate EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) told ME Tuesday that Pruitt has been "very responsive" to oversight requests from his office. "We've got the right person in that position doing a great job," he said. That stands in stark contrast to the panel's ranking member [Tom Carper](#), who told ME a day earlier he'd only received responses back to two of his 15 letters seeking information. Barrasso said he expected to call Pruitt to the Hill for hearings on the agency's budget and for oversight of the Toxic Substances Control Act in the coming weeks.

Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2017/05/carper-slams-pruitt-over-inadequate-answers-on-climate-plans-087872>

Carper slams Pruitt over inadequate answers on climate plans

By Anthony Adragna 5/17/17

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt responded to a letter from nearly two dozen Senate Democrats seeking details on his plans to review the Clean Power Plan with little more than copies of two press releases and a publicly available letter, drawing a sharp rebuke from Sen. [Tom Carper](#).

"Either Mr. Pruitt mistakenly believes that forwarding past press releases is a sufficient response or he doesn't have a plan to protect Americans from greenhouse gas emissions," Carper, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, told POLITICO in a statement accompanying a copy of Pruitt's [response](#).

"The job of the EPA is to protect public health and the environment," Carper added. "To Mr. Pruitt, I say do your job."

In their original April 7 letter, 23 Senate Democrats asked Pruitt to explain how he'd go about dismantling the Clean Power Plan and what kind of rule he would put in its place, given the agency's obligation to regulate greenhouse gases. They also asked for copies of all documents "related to any decision you take in EPA's review or under the Executive Order with respect to the Clean Power Plan."

That letter further asked Pruitt for the scientific sources he used as the basis for his ([false](#)) conclusion during a March television appearance that carbon dioxide is not the primary driver of global warming. Pruitt's response included a paragraph explaining President Donald Trump's late March [executive order](#) and nothing more of substance.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA is reviewing the Clean Power Plan to decide whether to suspend, revise or rescind the rule.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/17/rep-hunter-sewage-spilling-into-the-us-from-mexico-is-making-our-border-patrol-agents-sick/>

Rep. Hunter: Sewage spilling into the US from Mexico is making our border patrol agents sick

By Jonah Bennett 5/17.17

GOP California Rep. Duncan Hunter wrote a letter in May to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and head of the EPA Scott Pruitt, urging the two to take action on the sewage spill in Tijuana that is pouring into the U.S. and apparently making Border Patrol agents ill.

Hunter drew attention to the massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River that is still moving through San Diego County, and in the letter sent May 9, he noted that it's important to bring attention to the affects on Border Patrol agents and Navy SEAL members, not just the environmental impact of the spill.

"Compounding the environmental, economic and public health ramifications, it is imperative to highlight the negative impact this situation is having on our military and border enforcement personnel," Hunter wrote in a letter obtained by The Daily Caller News Foundation. "Individuals with the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Navy SEAL teams perform their responsibilities throughout this area on a daily basis. The current spill, as indicated in the pictures I've enclosed, is significant and has increased their risk for exposure to a multitude of diseases and pollutants."

"I have personally received reports of Border Patrol agents falling ill, being forced to leave their shifts and seek medical attention, possibly even putting their families at risk when these agents return home following events of exposure," Hunter continued. "Additionally, I am aware of critical military operations and exercises in the area being suspended because of the harmful conditions and risk the current spill poses."

For Hunter, the sewage seeping into the U.S. represents a drop in national security because of suspended military exercises.

The February sewage incident in Mexico occurred because of the collapse of a major sewage trunk line, and Hunter claims that Mexico is barely doing anything to clean up the mess in the aftermath. Moreover, Mexican officials never even informed the U.S. of the spill. At least 28 million gallons of raw sewage flowed into the Tijuana River earlier this year, but in actuality, that amount could be as high as 256 million gallons.

As such, Hunter wants the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency directly involved in "resolving this situation," as the International Boundary and Water Commission effort is insufficient.

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Mon 7/10/2017 4:23:44 PM
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

Jahan,

I checked with Definers whether the distribution of a daily compendium to aprox 600 is a problem. They said that it is no problem from their end. I have a list of 500+ who had received the clips under our previous contractor, which I could provide to Definers. Regarding the problem with e-mails going to spam, we had that problem with the previous contractor. It was pretty easy to solve; an e-mail from me warning people about it, solved the problem. Once you've moved it from Spam to your Inbox, the system remembers. I think it would reduce problems by having it sent out from one source, instead of having multiple redistribution points across the agency.

Also, just wanted to check, most of past leaders (appointed and career) have wanted the daily compendium in the morning. Do you still want it at 4:00 pm? - George

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 11:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

Agree – regions and comms directors can distribute the matrix in their offices

George, do we now have everything we need to get this in the system and get it moving?
thanksng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 11:27 AM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Clips Service Contract

I would update this to 8:00 AM EDT and then an afternoon matrix that is sent out by 4:00 PM EDT.

Additionally, in terms of sending this to 600 people, we might want to work with Mr. Pounder on clarifying what can and cannot be done to prevent anything from going into a SPAM filter or being shutdown. My suggestion would be daily, real-time alerts to roughly 100 people and then a matrix that would go to top people in each regional office and their press teams who can further distribute the information.

The contractor shall deliver the daily compendium by 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time. This briefing will go to a listserv maintained by the contractor of approximately 600 people. This daily compendium will include media coverage from the preceding 24 hour period, except in the case of the daily compendium for Monday mornings, which will also capture media coverage from the weekend. Alerts on breaking news will be delivered throughout the day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.

From: Hull, George
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Media Clips Service Contract

Hi Jahan,

Circling back to see if you have any comments, before we move forward on this. Thanks, George

From: Hull, George

Sent: Friday, July 07, 2017 6:40 PM

To: Nancy Grantham (grantham.nancy@epa.gov) <grantham.nancy@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Media Clips Service Contract

Nancy and Jahan,

Please find attached the draft “Statement of Work” for the Definers contract that we are developing. The Statement of Work is the section of the contract that lays out the details of what we expect the company to provide, parameters on delivery, timing, etc. I believe this language to be consistent with our conversations on the services we are seeking, but thought it was important that you review and have a chance to discuss or suggest changes. If you could get back to me on Monday morning, I can get any changes incorporated into the contract and continue forward. Thanks, George

To: Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 2:54:05 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL: EPA News Highlights 12.18.17

Thanks

From: Block, Molly
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 9:03 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA News Highlights 12.18.17

EPA News Highlights 12.8.17

The Oklahoman: Midwest City Will Test Former Eagle Industries Site for Contamination

The City of Midwest City will conduct environmental testing on a property it owns after The Oklahoman reported the site could contain cancer-causing toxins. Rita Kottke, an environmental programs director at DEQ, told council members that EPA headquarters in Washington has shown an interest in the site at 8828 SE 29. The EPA, now headed by former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, contacted DEQ and pushed them to conduct environmental testing, the first step in the Superfund process.

Casper Star Tribune: Barrasso Pushes EPA to Retract Proposed Groundwater Rules for Uranium Mining

While the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission both oversee uranium mining, when it comes to an Obama-era rule to protect groundwater, EPA needs to take a step back, according to Sen. John Barrasso. The EPA put the rule out for public comment one day before Barack Obama left office.

Washington Free Beacon: Hundreds of EPA Employees Have Quit Under Trump

Over 700 employees at the Environmental Protection Agency have quit or taken early retirement during the Trump administration so far, bringing the agency close to employment levels not seen since Reagan. Career bureaucrats taking voluntary buyouts is helping Pruitt and the Trump administration meet their goal of cutting the EPA workforce by 25 percent. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs," Pruitt has said.

Politico Morning Energy: Keep an Eye Out

Pro's Alex Guillén notes in Energy Regulation Watch that while the holidays tend to be a slower time for regulatory news, EPA told a federal court this week that its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for a replacement to the Clean Power Plan will publish "in the upcoming weeks." That notice, which OMB completed its review of on Thursday, sets the stage to replace the Obama-era rule.

New York Times: EPA Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an "environmental catastrophe." Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

National News Highlights 12.4.17

CNN: Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport Restores Power After Crippling Outage

Nearly 11 hours after a power outage paralyzed the world's busiest airport, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International got its electricity back late Sunday night. The lights flickered on shortly before midnight, after an exhausting day for travelers, that had left thousands stranded in dark terminals and on planes sitting on the tarmac. A ground stop in Atlanta disrupted air travel across the United States and led to cancellations of more than 1,000 flights in and out of the airport.

Fox News: Trump Transition Lawyer: Mueller Improperly Obtained Documents in Russia Probe

A lawyer for the Trump presidential transition team is accusing Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office of inappropriately obtaining transition documents as part of its Russia probe, including confidential attorney-client communications, privileged communications and thousands of emails without their knowledge. In a letter obtained by Fox News and sent to House and Senate committees on Saturday, the transition team's attorney alleges "unlawful conduct" by the career staff at the General Services Administration (GSA) in handing over transition documents to the special counsel's office.

Washington Post: GOP Faces 5-Day Scramble to Pass Tax Bill, Avoid Government Shutdown

Republicans return to Congress on Monday facing a packed agenda with little time to enact it, as party leaders aim to quickly pass their massive tax plan and then cut a budget deal with Democrats before the end of Friday to avert a government shutdown. Republicans' tight timing on taxes is self-imposed. GOP lawmakers have for months been racing to meet President Trump's demand that they send him tax legislation before Christmas — a timeline that gained new urgency when Alabama Democrat Doug Jones won the Senate seat currently occupied by Sen. Luther Strange (R).

Politico: The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook

In its determination to secure a nuclear deal with Iran, the Obama administration derailed an ambitious law enforcement campaign targeting drug trafficking by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah, even as it was funneling cocaine into the United States, according to a POLITICO investigation. But as Project Cassandra reached higher into the hierarchy of the conspiracy, Obama administration officials threw an increasingly insurmountable series of roadblocks in its way, according to interviews with dozens of participants who in many cases spoke for the first time about events shrouded in secrecy, and a review of government documents and court records.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Oklahoman

<http://newsok.com/midwest-city-will-test-former-eagle-industries-site-for-contamination/article/5576059>

Midwest City Will Test Former Eagle Industries Site for Contamination

By Justin Wingerter, 12/17/17

The City of Midwest City will conduct environmental testing on a property it owns after The Oklahoman reported the site could contain cancer-causing toxins.

The mayor and city council voted late Tuesday to spend \$24,681 on soil and groundwater tests at 8828 SE 29 St. It was previously owned by Eagle Industries, which illegally dumped trichloroethylene at a property two miles east, 10901 SE 29 St. That location is now a Superfund site.

Jerry Sultuska, a former Eagle employee, has said he and co-workers dumped trichloroethylene and other toxic chemicals at 8828 SE 29 after washing their hands and face with the carcinogen. The property was purchased by Midwest City in 2014 and has sat vacant since. Fifteen drums of radium-contaminated soil are buried beneath it.

“Our goal,” said Robert Coleman, the city's economic development director, “is to get the property to a level of compliance where we can do commercial development out there as quickly as possible, even though we may not move on it tomorrow.”

“It's a great spot,” he added in an interview Tuesday. “It's right on (Interstate) 40. It's easy to see. You've got exit ramps on either side of it right now and there's probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 80,000 to 90,000 cars a day that go in the vicinity.”

'Barrel of monkeys'

City council members have been surprised and frustrated by the realization that the city bought property from a polluter — property which cannot yet be developed and may contain deadly toxins. Prior to its purchase, city staff had been told the site was uncontaminated and suitable for development. A consultant who reached those conclusions never interviewed Sultuska or tested the site for trichloroethylene.

Five days after The Oklahoman article was published on Nov. 12, city staff spoke to Sultuska, who told them tests in 1976 found groundwater contamination and “confirmed it was commonplace to pour empty containers of chemicals just outside the doors” of two buildings at 8828, according to a memo Coleman sent to council members.

“We bought this barrel of monkeys and now we're stuck with it,” said Councilwoman Susan Eads.

Councilman Pat Byrne, who represents the area around 8828, has expressed skepticism about claims of contamination at the property and press coverage of Eagle Industry's illegal actions.

“Do we know if there's a problem here, then?” he asked Coleman on Tuesday. “I know the paper thinks — the news thinks there is. Is there a problem here?”

Coleman, along with Mayor Matt Dukes and city manager Guy Henson, are unsure but believe the city's best course of action is to move ahead with immediate testing. They were told Tuesday that Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality testing is at least a year away and the Environmental Protection Agency's process would take even longer. Coleman expects SCS Engineers, the firm hired by the city, to have results in eight to 10 weeks.

Rita Kottke, an environmental programs director at DEQ, told council members that EPA headquarters in Washington has shown an interest in the site at 8828 SE 29. The EPA, now headed by former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, contacted DEQ and pushed them to conduct environmental testing, the first step in the Superfund process.

“We've talked to EPA and asked them for the opportunity to see if anything's actually there because we have no data at this point,” Kottke said Tuesday. “If we can show them it's not as contaminated as everyone seems to think it is, then they'll back off.”

She urged Midwest City to conduct its own testing and share that data with DEQ to “stop the EPA in their tracks.”

“Unless it is that bad. If it is bad then maybe you do want EPA coming in and making it a Superfund site,” she said.

When soil and groundwater tests are complete sometime next year, several outcomes are possible. The tests could find no cause for concern, allowing Midwest City to develop the site and attract a grocery store or other retail opportunity. The tests could find minor contamination curative with soil extraction and other actions. Or the tests could find dire contamination requiring massive EPA action.

“If they were to put us on the Superfund list, while that would prohibit development in the area, it would also provide the means for cleanup of the area without millions of dollars of investment by us or by a developing entity,” said Eads, the councilwoman.

Superfund cleanup would require decades of work and cost federal taxpayers millions of dollars, a process already playing out two miles east at 10901 SE 29th Street. Eagle Industries has never paid a fine for its illegal dumping, first identified in 2003, and closed its doors in 2010.

Residents petition

Northeast of the Superfund site at 10901, where Eagle employees polluted the groundwater, 34 residents reliant on groundwater have filed a petition asking Midwest City to install a water line extension and connect them to the city's water system. Some have expressed frustration at the proposed cost: between \$721 and \$1,050 per household.

“To charge more for water connections in our community is discrimination against the poor

people,” said resident Teresa Scott. “The poor and the people on fixed incomes shouldn't have their rights to health and safety withheld ... 80 percent of our neighborhood will not be able to afford this.”

The city council has repeatedly postponed construction of the \$322,154 water line. Councilman Sean Reed said the council is waiting to survey all 45 homeowners in the area and gauge support for the plan. In a testy exchange, he and Scott debated when the city learned of Eagle's illegal contamination.

“The city, in no way shape or form, allowed the water to be polluted,” Reed told her. “That is not a true statement in any shape or form.”

“The city,” said Dukes, the mayor, “is not responsible for the actions that were taking place on private property at Eagle Industries. Unless we had a reason to be there — on a fire or a code enforcement issue or some other issue — we had no reason to even expect that they were doing what they were doing.”

Casper Star Tribune

http://trib.com/business/energy/barrasso-pushes-epa-to-retract-proposed-groundwater-rules-for-uranium/article_dc19b586-1c63-57d4-9843-6a0976d174ad.html

Barrasso Pushes EPA to Retract Proposed Groundwater Rules for Uranium Mining

By Heather Richards, 12/17/17

While the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission both oversee uranium mining, when it comes to an Obama-era rule to protect groundwater, EPA needs to take a step back, according to Sen. John Barrasso.

In a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on Thursday, the Wyoming senator notes a disagreement between the two agencies in regard to the proposed rule that, among other constraints, would require uranium companies to do 30 years of groundwater monitoring after in situ mining.

The EPA put the rule out for public comment one day before Barack Obama left office.

Barrasso says the rule should be retracted as it oversteps EPA's authority. The NRC has made similar comments.

Barrasso has not been shy about his feelings about the EPA, which he argues took on too much power during the Obama presidency. Overlapping authorities has been a key argument from

various industries in Wyoming when it comes to federal law. From permitting oil and gas wells, to complying with air quality regulations, a common complaint from industry groups is duplicity of federal rules and the associated cost.

Environmental groups tend to disagree, preferring strong federal rules that set a baseline for state standards.

Barrasso quotes the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in stressing that this rule doesn't address any proven health or safety concerns with in situ mining. According to the NRC, in situ mining hasn't resulted in contamination of an aquifer in its 40-year history under the NRC.

Noting the current low price environment for uranium, Barrasso suggested urgency from the EPA in withdrawing its rule, echoing the directive from President Donald Trump earlier this year that regulations that are unduly costly to industry should be reconsidered.

"It is incumbent upon EPA to refrain from imposing regulations that are not technically feasible or are unreasonably burdensome on licensees," Barrasso wrote.

The uranium industry has long pushed back on the rule for much the same reasons stated in Barrasso's letters.

"Most of it was impossible to comply with from a practical or even a scientific basis," said Paul Goranson, executive vice president of operations for Energy Fuels. The firm owns the Nichols Ranch in situ uranium mine in the Powder River Basin.

Industry tried to negotiate with the EPA last summer, Goranson said.

"They laughed in our face," he said. "There was no compromise."

Environmental groups say it's about time that in situ mining's impact on groundwater was regulated. Current standards only apply to conventional uranium mining, while in situ is directly interfering in the aquifer, they say.

The EPA is well within its right to regulate groundwater and uranium, they argue.

The EPA sets up the standards, the NRC implements them, according to federal law, said Shannon Anderson, lawyer for the Powder River Basin Resource Council.

"That's how that law has always worked," she said.

The group supports the EPA rule, though it's unclear what will happen under the new administration.

"It's definitely time to get some good standards out there protecting groundwater from uranium," she added.

Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/hundreds-epa-employees-quit-trump/>

Hundreds of EPA Employees Have Quit Under Trump

By Elizabeth Harrington, 12/15/17

Over 700 employees at the Environmental Protection Agency have quit or taken early retirement during the Trump administration so far, bringing the agency close to employment levels not seen since Reagan.

ThinkProgress, whose senior editor is scared of his plumber who he fears may have voted for Trump, is warning that the exodus will lead to "dirtier air" and "dirtier water."

"Since Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt took over the top job at the agency in March, more than 700 employees have either retired, taken voluntary buyouts, or quit, signaling the second-highest exodus of employees from the agency in nearly a decade," the liberal blog reported.

"According to agency documents and federal employment statistics, 770 EPA employees departed the agency between April and December, leaving employment levels close to Reagan-era levels of staffing," ThinkProgress said. "According to the EPA's contingency shutdown plan for December, the agency currently has 14,449 employees on board—a marked change from the April contingency plan, which showed a staff of 15,219."

After months of crying at their desks over Trump's election victory, bureaucrats are now "quitting in disgust."

"There has been a drop of employees of 770 between April and December. While several hundred of those are buyouts, the rest of those are either people that are retiring or quitting in disgust," Kyla Bennett, who works for a nonprofit for government environment works, told ThinkProgress. "Is that number higher than it would normally be? I think it is."

ThinkProgress quoted a former Obama EPA official who criticized the shrinking size of the EPA bureaucracy.

"Overall, large numbers of people leaving the EPA in this day and age is terrible," said Judith Enck. "Rolling back enforcement is very troubling—it essentially means that people are going to breathe dirtier air and drink dirtier water."

Career bureaucrats taking voluntary buyouts is helping Pruitt and the Trump administration meet

their goal of cutting the EPA workforce by 25 percent.

"We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs," Pruitt has said.

Politico: Morning Energy

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2017/12/sizing-up-the-tax-bills-energy-provisions-054933>

Keep an Eye Out

By Anthony Adragna, 12/18/17

Pro's Alex Guillén notes in [Energy Regulation Watch](#) that while the holidays tend to be a slower time for regulatory news, EPA told a federal court this week that its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for a replacement to the Clean Power Plan will publish "in the upcoming weeks." That notice, which OMB completed its review of on Thursday, sets the stage to replace the Obama-era rule.

PUBLISH THE RULE! Three senior House Energy and Commerce Democrats — [Frank Pallone](#), [Paul Tonko](#) and [Diana DeGette](#) — aren't pleased by Pruitt's plan to gather more input on the agency's Lead and Copper Rule and urged him to immediately move ahead with a proposed rule. "Administrator Pruitt is hiding this delay behind the guise of a novel consultation process with the states, but the states need to see the proposed rule in order to provide relevant comments," they said in a statement. "The EPA previously pledged to publish a proposed rule to revise the Lead and Copper Rule this month, and therefore we call on Administrator Pruitt to publish the proposed rule immediately."

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/17/us/politics/epa-pruitt-media-monitoring.html>

EPA Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email

By Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman, 12/17/17

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an “environmental catastrophe.” Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

The requests came from a Virginia-based lawyer working with America Rising, a Republican campaign research group that specializes in helping party candidates and conservative groups find damaging information on political rivals, and which, in this case, was looking for information that could undermine employees who had criticized the E.P.A.

Now a company affiliated with America Rising, named Definers Public Affairs, has been hired by the E.P.A. to provide “media monitoring,” in a move the agency said was intended to keep better track of newspaper and video stories about E.P.A. operations nationwide.

But the sequence of events has created a wave of fear among employees, particularly those already subject to special scrutiny, who said official assurances hardly put them at ease.

“This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment,” said Gary Morton, an E.P.A. employee in Philadelphia, who works on preventing spills from underground storage tanks. His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts. “What they are doing is trying to intimidate and bully us into silence,” he said.

The contract with Definers comes at a time of heightened tension between the news media and the Trump administration. Within the E.P.A., the move is also part of a bellicose media strategy that has been helped at key moments by America Rising — even before its affiliate was hired by the agency.

An E.P.A. official vehemently defended the \$120,000 contract to Definers, saying it filled a need in the media office for an improved clipping service.

“Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor, and they are providing no other services,” a spokesman for the E.P.A., Jahan Wilcox, wrote in an email.

Joe Pounder, a founder of Definers Public Affairs, said several government agencies had contacted his firm about its news-tracking tool, called Definers Console, because they were seeking a service that does a better job of keeping up with the fast-paced news cycle, including tracking of live-streamed videos. He said that agency staff members familiar with the company’s

work approached the firm about putting forward a bid and that Mr. Pruitt himself was not, to his knowledge, involved in the decision to select Definers.

“I hope E.P.A. employees realize after a few months that we are providing a really great and invaluable service that advances their mission,” Mr. Pounder said.

He and Matt Rhoades, his partner at Definers Public Affairs, also started America Rising. The two entities share several top executives, including Allan L. Blutstein, the lawyer who prepared the Freedom of Information Act requests aimed at the E.P.A. employees.

Some Republicans who previously worked for the agency said the hiring of Definers Public Affairs sent a worrisome message to employees already on edge and fearful of retaliation.

“Mr. Pruitt appears not to understand that the two most valuable assets E.P.A. has is the country’s trust and a very committed professional work force,” said William K. Reilly, the E.P.A. administrator under George Bush. “This shows complete insensitivity, complete tone-deafness, or something worse.”

Liz Mair, president of a Republican consulting firm, said that the relatively small dollar amount of the contract was an indication that all the agency was buying was a clipping service, and not some kind of sophisticated intelligence-gathering on employees. But she added that certain E.P.A. staff members actually merited more scrutiny.

“A lot of funky stuff has been going on with E.P.A. staff,” she said.

Mr. Blutstein said in an interview on Friday that his requests to the agency tracked employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt. He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt’s work.

“It was more of a fishing expedition on my part,” he said of the at least 20 Freedom of Information requests he submitted, most for E.P.A. employees who were union leaders or had spoken critically of agency management since Mr. Pruitt’s arrival.

Even before the E.P.A. hired Definers, the group of companies, political action committees and nonprofit organizations affiliated with America Rising had frequently drafted news releases that put Mr. Pruitt and his policies in a positive light and attacked the administrator’s critics. Many items, including video clips, also appeared on NTK Network, a for-profit digital news aggregator that Mr. Pounder founded.

In addition to sharing at least nine current and former executives, Definers Public Affairs shares an office building in Arlington, Va., with the multiple arms of America Rising and NTK Network.

E.P.A. staff members said in interviews that they had the right, as private citizens or members of a federal employees’ union, to publicly discuss concerns about changes taking place at the

agency under Mr. Pruitt's management. Some noted that "media monitoring" could be expected to include tracking of statements made on Twitter and other social media platforms, including potentially critical comments agency staff members make about E.P.A. management.

Michael Cox, who worked at the E.P.A.'s Seattle regional office for 25 years, learned this weekend from an article in The New York Times that he had been among the employees under scrutiny.

Mr. Cox wrote to Mr. Pruitt in March — on the day of Mr. Cox's retirement from the agency — to tell him that he was "increasingly alarmed about the direction of E.P.A. under your leadership," and to urge Mr. Pruitt to "step back and listen to career E.P.A. staff," the letter said.

Just 10 days later, a Freedom of Information request came in seeking Mr. Cox's correspondence on the day of his resignation. The request led to the production of 62 documents, detailing the names of dozens of agency officials, as well as a note he sent to his work colleagues specifically noting that he knew they shared his concerns with how the agency is being managed — names that would now be listed for anyone reviewing the response.

"That does not make me feel very good," he said, knowing that his emails could potentially be used against other employees.

Nicole Cantello, an E.P.A. lawyer in Chicago who has helped lead a series of enforcement actions against major air polluters in the Midwest, and whose emails also were requested, said the agency's decision to hire Definers caused great concern.

"Now that they are working for the agency, will they have access to agency computers and perhaps try to come after me in a whole bunch of different ways?" she said. "And will they turn over their opposition research materials on us to agency officials? I just don't know. It is very scary. Very, very scary."

Several of the Freedom of Information requests submitted by Mr. Blutstein ask for correspondence between agency employees and members of Congress — such as Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Democrat of Rhode Island, and Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts — who have been critical of Mr. Pruitt.

"We have seen a lot of nefarious activities from Trump," Mr. Whitehouse said. "But hiring a fossil fuel front group that specializes in political hits and is doing F.O.I.A. investigations of your agency's own employees is a new low."

E.P.A. employees are not the only ones who have been subjects of the group's Freedom of Information Act requests. Mr. Blutstein also has sought emails and other information from at least two climate scientists, Katharine Hayhoe of Texas Tech University and Robert Kopp of Rutgers University, who worked on a sweeping government climate change report. The Trump administration cleared the report for publication earlier this year.

"They're asking for emails related to a document that has already been public and has been

reviewed twice by E.P.A. and was ultimately approved by E.P.A.?” Ms. Hayhoe asked. “What do they think they’re going to find?”

The nonprofit arm of America Rising, known as America Rising Squared, oversees some of the group’s most controversial work on climate change: deploying “trackers” to videotape activists like Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, and Tom Steyer, the billionaire investor and Democratic donor.

“This is classic propaganda from an authoritarian regime,” Mr. Steyer said. “It’s distressing that it would even happen in the United States of America.”

Brian Rogers, executive director of America Rising Squared and a senior vice president at Definers, would not say who paid for the surveillance. In an emailed statement, he said that the firm had focused on Mr. Steyer and Mr. McKibben because they “aggressively target conservative thought leaders” for scrutiny.

“America Rising Squared is committed to ensuring a balanced debate, and providing a conservative perspective on the issues and actors involved,” Mr. Rogers said.

Mr. Reilly, the former E.P.A. administrator, said the whole sequence of incidents — and now the agency’s involvement in it — was deeply disturbing.

“These are committed people,” he said of the agency employees. “It’s not just a job for them. To put their morale and their good standing in danger is going to risk losing something very valuable to the government and to the country.”

CNN

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/17/us/atlanta-airport-power-outage/index.html>

Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson Airport Restores Power After Crippling Outage

By Emanuella Grinberg, Jon Ostrower, Madison Park and Christina Zdanowicz, 12/18/17

Nearly 11 hours after a power outage paralyzed the world's busiest airport, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International got its electricity back late Sunday night.

The lights flickered on shortly before midnight, after an exhausting day for travelers, that had left thousands stranded in dark terminals and on planes sitting on the tarmac. A ground stop in Atlanta disrupted air travel across the United States and led to cancellations of more than 1,000 flights in and out of the airport.

Shortly after power came back, some passengers lined up at security screening, hoping to beat the crowds as the TSA checkpoints re-opened at 3:30 a.m. The airport could see a logjam of passengers and delays as more than 400 flights have been canceled Monday.

The outage, which affected all airport operations, started with a fire in a Georgia Power underground electrical facility, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed said. The electrical fire's intensity damaged two substations serving the airport, including the airport's "redundant system" that should have provided backup power, Reed said.

Atlanta airport outage complicates insanely busy holiday travel

Atlanta is the heart of the US air transport system, and the disruption led to 1,180 flight cancellations to and from the airport Sunday, according to flight tracking service FlightAware.

Delta, which has its largest hub in Atlanta, canceled 300 flights Monday, most of which are morning, inbound flights to Hartsfield-Jackson. Delta tweeted that it expects flight schedules "to return to normal by Monday afternoon."

But weather could complicate matters in the morning as a dense fog advisory is in effect.

Sunday's standstill at the airport ripples beyond Atlanta, said Desmond Ross, principal of DRA Professional Aviation Services.

"There's a lot of other issues downstream to all other airports, where flights should be arriving and departing, connecting to Atlanta, that are going to be disrupted as well. So we're talking possibly millions of people disrupted over the next few days and it is certainly not going to be fixed in one day," he said.

Cause of fire unknown

At 12:38 p.m., Georgia Power noticed outages in the system that were traced to a fire in underground tunnels where the airport's electric system lives, spokeswoman Bentina Terry said. The fire caused multiple faults that led to the full blackout at 1:06 p.m.

The fire's intensity prevented Georgia Power crews from immediately being able to access the tunnels and work on restoring power, Reed added. By 3:30 p.m., fire crews were able to contain the fire and started to work on restoring power. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined, but nothing suggests it was set deliberately, he said.

"We certainly understand that the outage has caused frustration and anger and we are doing everything that we can to get folks back home right away," Reed said at a Sunday night news conference.

Georgia Power said in a statement that its equipment -- a piece of switchgear -- which was in an underground electrical facility, could have failed and started a fire. The incident is still being evaluated, according to the utility.

The blackout led the Federal Aviation Administration to declare a ground stop at the airport, preventing Atlanta-bound flights in other airports from taking off and causing inbound flights to be diverted.

Inside the airport, the outage cut power in the terminals, leaving passengers stranded in the dark as they stood in line at gates and security checkpoints. An estimated 30,000 people were affected by the power outage, Reed said.

People used flashlights on their phones to see where they were going, said passenger Heather Kerwin, an Atlanta resident bound for New York.

"There were a few emergency lights on, but it was really dark -- felt totally apocalyptic," she said. "I decided to get the hell out of there."

Some passengers told CNN that airport and airline staff offered no updates as hours passed, leaving people scanning their phones and tablets for information. Stores stopped serving food and passengers were evacuated to alleviate crowding.

The city of Atlanta opened the Georgia International Convention Center and offered shuttle services there for stranded passengers who needed a place to stay for the night, according to the city's verified twitter account. Chick-fil-A supplied food to passengers, although the chain is closed on Sundays.

Trapped for hours

The outage left passengers sitting in planes on the tarmac for hours.

Jodi Green's Delta flight from the Bahamas landed at 1:15 p.m. ET Sunday. Seven hours later, she was still on the plane. Green said the pilot told passengers that other flights that had ran out of fuel were evacuated before theirs. Despite the circumstances, she said, order prevailed.

"People are calm, laughing, joking," she said. "I'm amazed I've been able to sit here and not lose my mind."

CNN's Betsy Klein spent nearly seven hours in a plane on the tarmac, waiting to move. At one point, the crew said 92 planes were stuck on the tarmac, Klein said. People maintained composure as food and drinks ran out, but by hour seven, patience was wearing thin.

When she finally deplaned around 9 p.m. it was sweltering inside the airport, she said. It was unclear who was in charge and people were lying on the floor and on baggage claim belts.

The ground stop led Southwest Airlines to cancel all operations in and out of Atlanta for the rest of the day, spokesman Brian Parrish said. United and American Airlines also suspended operations to and from Atlanta for the rest of Sunday.

Delta, which has its headquarters in Atlanta, canceled more than 900 flights Sunday. The airline urged passengers scheduled to fly on Monday to check their flights.

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/12/16/trump-lawyer-mueller-improperly-obtained-transition-documents-in-russia-probe.html>

Trump Transition Lawyer: Mueller Improperly Obtained Documents in Russia Probe

By John Roberts, Alex Pappas, 12/17/17

A lawyer for the Trump presidential transition team is accusing Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office of inappropriately obtaining transition documents as part of its Russia probe, including confidential attorney-client communications, privileged communications and thousands of emails without their knowledge.

In a letter obtained by Fox News and sent to House and Senate committees on Saturday, the transition team's attorney alleges "unlawful conduct" by the career staff at the General Services Administration (GSA) in handing over transition documents to the special counsel's office.

Kory Langhofer, the counsel to Trump for America (TFA), argues the GSA "did not own or control the records in question" and the release of documents could be a violation of the Fourth Amendment – which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Langhofer wrote in Saturday's letter that the GSA handed over "tens of thousands of emails" to Mueller's probe without "any notice" to the transition.

The attorney said they discovered the "unauthorized disclosures" by the GSA on Dec. 12 and 13 and raised concerns with the special counsel's office. The Associated Press reported that the GSA turned over a flash drive containing tens of thousands of records on Sept. 1 after receiving requests from Mueller's office in late August.

Those records included emails sent and received by 13 senior Trump transition officials. Among the officials who used transition email accounts was former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who pleaded guilty to a count of making false statements to FBI agents in January and is now cooperating with Mueller's investigation.

"We understand that the special counsel's office has subsequently made extensive use of the materials it obtained from the GSA, including materials that are susceptible to privilege claims," Langhofer wrote. He added that some of the records obtained by the special counsel's office from the GSA "have been leaked to the press by unknown persons."

The transition attorney said the special counsel's office also received laptops, cell phones and at least one iPad from the GSA.

Trump for America is the nonprofit organization that facilitated the transition between former President Barack Obama to President Trump.

The GSA, an agency of the United States government, provided the transition team with office space and hosted its email servers.

“When we have obtained emails in the course of our ongoing criminal investigation, we have secured either the account owner’s consent or appropriate criminal process,” Peter Carr, spokesman for the special counsel’s office, told Fox News.

In an interview with BuzzFeed News Saturday evening, GSA Deputy Counsel Lenny Loewentritt denied Langhofer's claim that then-GSA General Counsel Richard Beckler had promised that any requests for transition team records would be "routed to legal counsel for [Trump for America]."

"Beckler never made that commitment," said Loewentritt, who added that transition team members were warned that information "would not be held back in any law enforcement" investigation and that "no expectation of privacy can be assumed." (Langhofer's letter notes that Beckler "was hospitalized and incapacitated in August." He died the following month.)

Loewentritt also told BuzzFeed that the GSA suggested that Mueller's team issue a warrant or subpoena for the transition team materials, but the special prosecutor's office decided a letter requesting the materials would suffice.

“We continue to cooperate fully with the special counsel and expect this process to wrap up soon,” Sarah Sanders, the White House press secretary, said Saturday.

In his letter, Langhofer argued the GSA's actions “impair the ability of future presidential transition teams to candidly discuss policy and internal matters that benefit the country as a whole.”

Langhofer requests in the letter that Congress “act immediately to protect future presidential transitions from having their private records misappropriated by government agencies, particularly in the context of sensitive investigations intersecting with political motives.”

The letter was sent to the Senate Homeland Security and House Oversight Committees.

The committees did not immediately return a request for comment.

Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/gop-faces-5-day-scramble-to-pass-tax-bill-avoid-government-shutdown/2017/12/17/e3292264-e363-11e7-833f-155031558ff4_story.html?utm_term=.67801861a075

GOP Faces 5-Day Scramble to Pass Tax Bill, Avoid Government Shutdown

By Jeff Stein, Mike DeBonis and Patrick Reis, 12/17/17

Republicans return to Congress on Monday facing a packed agenda with little time to enact it, as party leaders aim to quickly pass their massive tax plan and then cut a budget deal with Democrats before the end of Friday to avert a government shutdown.

Republicans' tight timing on taxes is self-imposed. GOP lawmakers have for months been racing to meet President Trump's demand that they send him tax legislation before Christmas — a timeline that gained new urgency when Alabama Democrat Doug Jones won the Senate seat currently occupied by Sen. Luther Strange (R).

GOP leaders hope to hold tax votes early in the week before moving to the budget bill. They need Democrats' help to pass the budget measure through the Senate, and thus far they have made little progress bringing them aboard amid disagreements over spending levels, protection from deportation for certain undocumented immigrants and a federal health insurance program for low-income children.

The outcome of the tax votes, however, appears certain after Republican Sens. Marco Rubio (Fla.) and Bob Corker (Tenn.) on Friday pledged their support. The two gave the GOP the Senate votes to pass the bill, even as Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who is battling an aggressive form of brain cancer, returned to Arizona on Sunday. He is not expected to vote on the final bill.

The measure's passage would mark the first major legislative accomplishment for Trump and GOP leaders in a year of stumbles, the products of months of negotiations and late adjustments aimed at winning over the last holdouts.

Republicans fanned out across the national news shows Sunday as part of their continued efforts to sell the public on the bill, promising benefits to the middle class both from tax cuts and ensuing economic growth.

"We think as a result of lowering business taxes, wages will go up. So, this is a huge opportunity for creating jobs, for creating tax cuts for working families," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

Congress' nonpartisan tax analysts, joining several other nonpartisan assessments, concluded that the bulk of the bill's benefits would go to the wealthy and corporations. Those analyses have

also projected that the cuts will produce far less economic growth than Trump and administration officials are promising.

The plan, unveiled in its final form Friday, would make the biggest changes to the tax code in three decades. Most significant, it would drop the corporate tax rate to 21 percent from 35 percent. The bill also would cut taxes for nearly all individuals, giving the biggest trims to the wealthy but in most cases providing some relief for the middle class.

Polls suggest that the public is skeptical of the promised major gains for the middle class. In a recent CBS poll, 76 percent of respondents said the bill's biggest benefits would go to the largest corporations. Democrats, who were shut out of the bill's construction and find themselves all but powerless to prevent its passage, attempted to hammer home that point Sunday.

"What we are seeing here is a real massive attack on the middle class," Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who caucuses with Democrats in the Senate, said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation."

For Republicans, the bigger drama may come later in the week, after the planned tax votes in the House and Senate, when leaders from both parties weigh a spending deal to avoid a partial government shutdown before funding runs out at the end of the day Friday.

As the tax debate has consumed Congress, there has been scant progress toward a spending deal.

House Republican leaders filed a spending bill last week that would temporarily extend funding for most government agencies at current levels until Jan. 19, while providing longer-term military funding at higher levels — \$650 billion through Sept. 30. That bill is considered dead on arrival in the Senate, where Democrats can block it because of the chamber's 60-vote filibuster threshold.

To cut a long-term spending deal, Democrats are pushing for an equivalent increase in defense and nondefense funding above the spending caps set under a 2011 agreement — one similar to deals reached in 2013 and 2015 to raise the caps for the following two years. But bipartisan negotiations that have been open for weeks have yet to produce an accord.

Democrats railed against the House GOP gambit last week. Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), in floor remarks Thursday, called the proposal "a spectacle, a charade, a sop to some militant, hard-right people who don't want the government to spend money on almost anything."

He added, "And it is a perilous waste of time as the clock ticks closer and closer and closer to the end of the year."

The spending talks are suffused with other issues. For instance, Democrats and some Republicans want legislation providing legal status to "dreamers" — immigrants brought to the United States as children without documentation — to be attached to the year-end deal.

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) struck a deal with Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch

McConnell (R-Ky.) to provide subsidies for the Affordable Care Act health insurance marketplaces in return for her vote on the tax bill, but it remains to be seen whether those provisions will be included in any final accord.

The Children's Health Insurance Program expired Sept. 30, and states have been warning for weeks that coverage could be threatened if Congress does not reauthorize it soon.

And a key surveillance authority used by U.S. intelligence agencies to monitor noncitizens abroad expires Dec. 31, prompting fears of a lapse in national security.

Even if a bipartisan agreement is reached on some or all of these issues, the timeline is tight: The House is not expected to vote on its spending bill until Wednesday at the earliest. That would leave little time for the Senate to take that bill, amend it, and send it back to the House, and any hiccup could mean a breach of the Friday shutdown deadline.

Congress averted a partial shutdown earlier in the month with a two-week deal that left spending constant and punted on all other policy questions, but it's unclear if either side has interest in another short-term deal.

For Democrats, the vote represents a moment of leverage in a Congress in which Republicans have used their control of government to shut the minority party out of the legislative process almost entirely. With enough Senate votes to filibuster any deal, the Democrats' leaders, Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), are under intense pressure from their base to protect spending on domestic programs and secure concessions on immigration.

The young people, many of whom have lived in the United States for nearly their entire lives, were afforded temporary protection from deportation via an executive order from President Barack Obama. The Trump administration is changing that policy, and Democrats — as well as some Republicans, such as Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) — are eager to replace it with new protections.

Republicans face their own intraparty tensions.

Hard-line conservatives in the House want GOP leaders to stand firm against Democrats' insistence on raising nondefense spending, arguing that Republicans ought not bow down to those demands when the GOP holds the White House and both chambers of Congress.

If House leaders bow to those demands, the showdown could push an extension past the Friday deadline. Come Saturday morning, many agencies dealing with the public would close their doors, including national parks and federal buildings, though many personnel deemed "essential" to national security and public safety would continue to work.

Republicans of all stripes have campaigned on cutting spending, but since the 2011 accord, federal outlays have continued to rise.

The tax bill, meanwhile, is projected to increase the deficit by at least \$1 trillion over the next

decade, a figure that would expand greatly if Republicans are correct that future Congresses will extend the plan's many income tax cuts set to expire in eight years.

Few Republicans have raised major concerns about the tax bill based on its fiscal impact. GOP leaders assert the plan will generate enough economic growth to pay for itself, though virtually every independent analysis of the plan has found that it will fall short of that goal. One prominent senator who raised deficit concerns, Tennessee's Corker, reversed his opposition to the bill on Friday, saying he had concluded that the country would be "better off with it" than without it.

Politico Magazine

<https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017/obama-hezbollah-drug-trafficking-investigation/>

The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook

By Josh Meyer, 12/17/17

PART I: A GLOBAL THREAT EMERGES

How Hezbollah turned to trafficking cocaine and laundering money through used cars to finance its expansion.

In its determination to secure a nuclear deal with Iran, the Obama administration derailed an ambitious law enforcement campaign targeting drug trafficking by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah, even as it was funneling cocaine into the United States, according to a POLITICO investigation.

The campaign, dubbed Project Cassandra, was launched in 2008 after the Drug Enforcement Administration amassed evidence that Hezbollah had transformed itself from a Middle East-focused military and political organization into an international crime syndicate that some investigators believed was collecting \$1 billion a year from drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering and other criminal activities.

Over the next eight years, agents working out of a top-secret DEA facility in Chantilly, Virginia, used wiretaps, undercover operations and informants to map Hezbollah's illicit networks, with the help of 30 U.S. and foreign security agencies.

They followed cocaine shipments, some from Latin America to West Africa and on to Europe and the Middle East, and others through Venezuela and Mexico to the United States. They tracked the river of dirty cash as it was laundered by, among other tactics, buying American used cars and shipping them to Africa. And with the help of some key cooperating witnesses, the

agents traced the conspiracy, they believed, to the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran.

They followed cocaine shipments, tracked a river of dirty cash, and traced what they believed to be the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran.

But as Project Cassandra reached higher into the hierarchy of the conspiracy, Obama administration officials threw an increasingly insurmountable series of roadblocks in its way, according to interviews with dozens of participants who in many cases spoke for the first time about events shrouded in secrecy, and a review of government documents and court records. When Project Cassandra leaders sought approval for some significant investigations, prosecutions, arrests and financial sanctions, officials at the Justice and Treasury departments delayed, hindered or rejected their requests.

The Justice Department declined requests by Project Cassandra and other authorities to file criminal charges against major players such as Hezbollah's high-profile envoy to Iran, a Lebanese bank that allegedly laundered billions in alleged drug profits, and a central player in a U.S.-based cell of the Iranian paramilitary Quds force. And the State Department rejected requests to lure high-value targets to countries where they could be arrested.

"This was a policy decision, it was a systematic decision," said David Asher, who helped establish and oversee Project Cassandra as a Defense Department illicit finance analyst. "They serially ripped apart this entire effort that was very well supported and resourced, and it was done from the top down."

The untold story of Project Cassandra illustrates the immense difficulty in mapping and countering illicit networks in an age where global terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime have merged, but also the extent to which competing agendas among government agencies — and shifting priorities at the highest levels — can set back years of progress.

And while the pursuit may be shadowed in secrecy, from Latin American luxury hotels to car parks in Africa to the banks and battlefields of the Middle East, the impact is not: In this case, multi-ton loads of cocaine entering the United States, and hundreds of millions of dollars going to a U.S.-designated terrorist organization with vast reach.

Obama had entered office in 2009 promising to improve relations with Iran as part of a broader rapprochement with the Muslim world. On the campaign trail, he had asserted repeatedly that the Bush administration's policy of pressuring Iran to stop its illicit nuclear program wasn't working, and that he would reach out to Tehran to reduce tensions.

The man who would become Obama's top counterterrorism adviser and then CIA director, John Brennan, went further. He recommended in a [policy paper](#) that "the next president has the opportunity to set a new course for relations between the two countries" through not only a direct dialogue, but "greater assimilation of Hezbollah into Lebanon's political system."

By May 2010, Brennan, then assistant to the president for homeland security and

counterterrorism, confirmed in a speech that the administration was looking for ways to build up “moderate elements” within Hezbollah.

“Hezbollah is a very interesting organization,” Brennan told a Washington conference, saying it had evolved from “purely a terrorist organization” to a militia and, ultimately, a political party with representatives in the Lebanese Parliament and Cabinet, according to a Reuters report.

“There is certainly the elements of Hezbollah that are truly a concern to us what they’re doing,” Brennan said. “And what we need to do is to find ways to diminish their influence within the organization and to try to build up the more moderate elements.”

In practice, the administration’s willingness to envision a new role for Hezbollah in the Middle East, combined with its desire for a negotiated settlement to Iran’s nuclear program, translated into a reluctance to move aggressively against the top Hezbollah operatives, according to Project Cassandra members and others.

Lebanese arms dealer Ali Fayad, a suspected top Hezbollah operative whom agents believed reported to Russian President Vladimir Putin as a key supplier of weapons to Syria and Iraq, was arrested in Prague in the spring of 2014. But for the nearly two years Fayad was in custody, top Obama administration officials declined to apply serious pressure on the Czech government to extradite him to the United States, even as Putin was lobbying aggressively against it.

Fayad, who had been indicted in U.S. courts on charges of planning the murders of U.S. government employees, attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization and attempting to acquire, transfer and use anti-aircraft missiles, was ultimately sent to Beirut. He is now believed by U.S. officials to be back in business, and helping to arm militants in Syria and elsewhere with Russian heavy weapons.

Project Cassandra members say administration officials also blocked or undermined their efforts to go after other top Hezbollah operatives including one nicknamed the ‘Ghost,’ allowing them to remain active despite being under sealed U.S. indictment for years. People familiar with his case say the Ghost has been one of the world’s biggest cocaine traffickers, including to the U.S., as well as a major supplier of conventional and chemical weapons for use by Syrian President Bashar Assad against his people.

And when Project Cassandra agents and other investigators sought repeatedly to investigate and prosecute Abdallah Safieddine, Hezbollah’s longtime envoy to Iran, whom they considered the linchpin of Hezbollah’s criminal network, the Justice Department refused, according to four former officials with direct knowledge of the cases.

The administration also rejected repeated efforts by Project Cassandra members to charge Hezbollah’s military wing as an ongoing criminal enterprise under a federal Mafia-style racketeering statute, task force members say. And they allege that administration officials declined to designate Hezbollah a “significant transnational criminal organization” and blocked other strategic initiatives that would have given the task force additional legal tools, money and manpower to fight it.

Former Obama administration officials declined to comment on individual cases, but noted that the State Department condemned the Czech decision not to hand over Fayad. Several of them, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were guided by broader policy objectives, including de-escalating the conflict with Iran, curbing its nuclear weapons program and freeing at least four American prisoners held by Tehran, and that some law enforcement efforts were undoubtedly constrained by those concerns.

But the former officials denied that they derailed any actions against Hezbollah or its Iranian allies for political reasons.

“There has been a consistent pattern of actions taken against Hezbollah, both through tough sanctions and law enforcement actions before and after the Iran deal,” said Kevin Lewis, an Obama spokesman who worked at both the White House and Justice Department in the administration.

Lewis, speaking for the Obama administration, provided a list of eight arrests and prosecutions as proof. He made special note of a February 2016 operation in which European authorities arrested an undisclosed number of alleged members of a special Hezbollah business affairs unit that the DEA says oversees its drug trafficking and other criminal money-making enterprises.

Project Cassandra officials, however, noted that the European arrests occurred after the negotiations with Iran were over, and said the task force initiated the multinational partnerships on its own, after years of seeing their cases shot down by the Justice and State departments and other U.S. agencies.

The Justice Department, they pointed out, never filed corresponding U.S. criminal charges against the suspects arrested in Europe, including one prominent Lebanese businessman formally designated by the Treasury Department for using his “direct ties to Hezbollah commercial and terrorist elements” to launder bulk shipments of illicit cash for the organization throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

A former senior national security official of the Obama administration, who played a role in the Iran nuclear negotiations, suggested that Project Cassandra members were merely speculating that their cases were being blocked for political reasons. Other factors, including a lack of evidence or concerns about interfering with intelligence operations could have been in play.

“What if the CIA or the Mossad had an intelligence operation ongoing inside Hezbollah and they were trying to pursue someone . . . against whom we had impeccable [intelligence] collection and the DEA is not going to know that?” the official said. “I get the feeling people who don’t know what’s going on in the broader universe are grasping at straws.”

The official added: “The world is a lot more complicated than viewed through the narrow lens of drug trafficking. So you’re not going to let CIA rule the roost, but you’re also certainly not going to let DEA do it either. Your approach to anything as complicated as Hezbollah is going to have to involve the interagency [process], because the State Department has a piece of the pie, the

intelligence community does, Treasury does, DOD does.”

Nonetheless, other sources independent of Project Cassandra confirmed many of the allegations in interviews with POLITICO, and in some cases, in public comments.

One Obama-era Treasury official, Katherine Bauer, in little-noticed written testimony presented last February to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, acknowledged that “under the Obama administration ... these [Hezbollah-related] investigations were tamped down for fear of rocking the boat with Iran and jeopardizing the nuclear deal.”

As a result, some Hezbollah operatives were not pursued via arrests, indictments, or Treasury designations that would have blocked their access to U.S. financial markets, according to Bauer, a career Treasury official, who served briefly in its Office of Terrorist Financing as a senior policy adviser for Iran before leaving in late 2015. And other “Hezbollah facilitators” arrested in France, Colombia, Lithuania have not been extradited — or indicted — in the U.S., she wrote.

Bauer, in an interview, declined to elaborate on her testimony.

Asher, for one, said Obama administration officials expressed concerns to him about alienating Tehran before, during and after the Iran nuclear deal negotiations. This was, he said, part of an effort to “defang, defund and undermine the investigations that were involving Iran and Hezbollah,” he said.

“The closer we got to the [Iran deal], the more these activities went away,” Asher said. “So much of the capability, whether it was special operations, whether it was law enforcement, whether it was [Treasury] designations — even the capacity, the personnel assigned to this mission — it was assiduously drained, almost to the last drop, by the end of the Obama administration.”

With much fanfare, Obama announced the final agreement on implementation of the Iran deal on Jan. 17, 2016, in which Tehran promised to shelve efforts to build a nuclear weapons program in exchange for being released from crippling international economic sanctions.

Within months, task force officials said, Project Cassandra was all but dead. Some of its most senior officials, including Jack Kelly, the veteran DEA supervisory agent who created and led the task force, were transferred to other assignments. And Asher himself left the task force long before that, after the Defense Department said his contract would not be renewed.

As a result, the U.S. government lost insight into not only drug trafficking and other criminal activity worldwide, but also into Hezbollah’s illicit conspiracies with top officials in the Iranian, Syrian, Venezuelan and Russian governments — all the way up to presidents Nicolas Maduro, Assad and Putin, according to former task force members and other current and former U.S. officials.

The derailment of Project Cassandra also has undermined U.S. efforts to determine how much cocaine from the various Hezbollah-affiliated networks is coming into the United States, especially from Venezuela, where dozens of top civilian and military officials have been under

investigation for more than a decade. Recently, the Trump administration designated the country's vice president, a close ally of Hezbollah and of Lebanese-Syrian descent, as a global narcotics kingpin.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah — in league with Iran — continues to undermine U.S. interests in Iraq, Syria and throughout wide swaths of Latin America and Africa, including providing weapons and training to anti-American Shiite militias. And Safieddine, the Ghost and other associates continue to play central roles in the trafficking of drugs and weapons, current and former U.S. officials believe.

“They were a paramilitary organization with strategic importance in the Middle East, and we watched them become an international criminal conglomerate generating billions of dollars for the world's most dangerous activities, including chemical and nuclear weapons programs and armies that believe America is their sworn enemy,” said Kelly, the supervisory DEA agent and lead coordinator of its Hezbollah cases.

“If they are violating U.S. statutes,” he asked, “why can't we bring them to justice?”

Kelly and Asher are among the officials involved in Project Cassandra who have been quietly contacted by the Trump administration and congressional Republicans, who said a special POLITICO report April 24 on Barack Obama's hidden Iran deal concessions raised urgent questions about the need to resurrect key law enforcement programs to counter Iran.

That won't be easy, according to former Project Cassandra members, even with President Donald Trump's recent vow to crack down on Iran and Hezbollah. They said they tried to keep the project on life support, in hopes that it would be revived by the next administration, but the loss of key personnel, budget cuts and dropped investigations are only a few of many challenges made worse by the passage of nearly a year since Trump took office.

“You can't let these things disintegrate,” said Kelly. “Sources evaporate. Who knows if we can find all of the people willing to testify?”

Derek Maltz, who oversaw Project Cassandra as the head of the DEA's Special Operations Division for nine years ending in July 2014, put it this way: “Certainly there are targets that people feel that could have been indicted and weren't. There is certainly an argument to be made that if tomorrow all the agencies were ordered to come together and sit in a room and put all the evidence on the table against all these bad guys, that there could be a hell of a lot of indictments.”

But Maltz said the damage wrought by years of political interference will be hard to repair.

“There's no doubt in my mind now that the focus was this Iran deal and our initiative was kind of like a fly in the soup,” Maltz said. “We were the train that went off the tracks.”

Project Cassandra had its origins in a series of investigations launched in the years after the 9/11 attacks which all led, via their own twisted paths, to Hezbollah as a suspected global criminal

enterprise.

Operation Titan, in which the DEA worked with Colombian authorities to explore a global alliance between Lebanese money launderers and Colombian drug trafficking conglomerates, was one. Operation Perseus, targeting Venezuelan syndicates, was another. At the same time, DEA agents in West Africa were investigating the suspicious flow of thousands of used cars from U.S. dealerships to car parks in Benin.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, the U.S. military was probing the role of Iran in outfitting Shiite militias with high-tech improvised explosive devices known as Explosively Formed Penetrators, or EFPs, that had already killed hundreds of U.S. soldiers.

All of these paths eventually converged on Hezbollah.

This wasn't entirely a surprise, agents say. For decades, Hezbollah — in close cooperation with Iranian intelligence and Revolutionary Guard — had worked with supporters in Lebanese communities around the world to create a web of businesses that were long suspected of being fronts for black-market trading. Along the same routes that carried frozen chicken and consumer electronics, these businesses moved weapons, laundered money and even procured parts for Iran's illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

As they pursued their investigations, the DEA agents found that Hezbollah was redoubling all of these efforts, working urgently to raise cash, and lots of it, to rebuild its south Lebanon stronghold after a 2006 war with Israel had reduced it to rubble.

Dating back to its inception in the early 1980s, Hezbollah, which translates to "Party of God," had also engaged in "narcoterrorism," collecting a tariff from drug dealers and other black-market suppliers who operated in territory it controlled in Lebanon and elsewhere. Now, based on the DEA's extensive network of informants, undercover operatives and wiretaps, it looked like Hezbollah had shifted tactics, and gotten directly involved in the global cocaine trade, according to interviews and documents, including a confidential DEA assessment.

"It was like they flipped a switch," Kelly told POLITICO. "All of a sudden, they reversed the flow of all of the black-market activity they had been taxing for years, and took control of the operation."

Operating like an organized crime family, Hezbollah operatives would identify businesses that might be profitable and useful as covers for cocaine trafficking and buy financial stakes in them, Kelly and others said. "And if the business was successful and suited their current needs," Kelly said, "they went from partial owners to majority owners to full partnership or takeover."

Hezbollah even created a special financial unit that, translated into English, means "Business Affairs Component," to oversee the sprawling criminal operation, and it was run by the world's most wanted terrorist after Osama bin Laden, a notoriously vicious Hezbollah military commander named Imad Mughniyeh, according to DEA interviews and documents.

Mughniyeh had for decades been the public face of terrorism for Americans, orchestrating the infamous attack that killed 241 U.S. Marines in 1983 in their barracks in Lebanon, and dozens more Americans in attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Beirut that year and an annex the year after. When President Ronald Reagan responded to the attacks by withdrawing peacekeeping troops from Lebanon, Hezbollah claimed a major victory and vaulted to the forefront of the Islamist resistance movement against the West.

Over the next 25 years, Iran's financial and military support for Hezbollah enabled it to amass an army with tens of thousands of foot soldiers, more heavy armaments than most nation-states and approximately 120,000 rockets and ballistic missiles that could strike Israel and U.S. interests in the region with devastating precision.

Hezbollah became an expert in soft power, as well. It provided food, medical care and other social services for starving refugees in war-torn Lebanon, winning credibility on the ground. It then evolved further into a powerful political party, casting itself as the defender of poor, mostly Shiite Lebanese against Christian and Sunni Muslim elites. But even as Hezbollah was moving into the mainstream of Lebanese politics, Mughniyeh was overseeing a secret expansion of its terrorist wing, the Islamic Jihad Organization. Working with Iranian intelligence agents, Islamic Jihad continued to attack Western, Israeli and Jewish targets around the world, and to conduct surveillance on others — including in the United States — in preparation for future attacks.

Hezbollah mostly left the United States alone, in what was clearly a strategic decision to avoid U.S. retaliation. But by 2008, the Bush administration came to believe that Islamic Jihad was the most dangerous terrorist organization in the world, capable of launching instantaneous attacks, possibly with chemical, biological or low-grade nuclear weapons, that would dwarf those on 9/11.

By funding terrorism and military operations through global drug trafficking and organized crime, Mughniyeh's business affairs unit within Islamic Jihad had become the embodiment of the kind of threat the United States was struggling to address in the post-9/11 world.

The DEA believed that it was the logical U.S. national security agency to lead the interagency effort to go after Mughniyeh's drug trafficking networks. But within the multipronged U.S. national security apparatus, this was both a questionable and problematic assertion.

Established by President Richard Nixon in 1973 to bring together the various anti-drug programs under the Department of Justice, the DEA was among the youngest of the U.S. national security agencies.

And while the DEA had quickly proven itself adept at working on the global stage — especially in partnerships with drug-infested countries desperate for U.S. help like Colombia — few people within the U.S. government thought of it as a legitimate counterterrorism force.

In the final years of the Bush administration, though, the DEA had won the support of top officials for taking down two major international arms dealers, a Syrian named Monzer al-Kassar and the Russian "Lord of War," Viktor Bout. And thanks to supportive Republicans in

Congress, it had become the beneficiary of a new federal law that empowered its globe-trotting cadre of assault-weapon-toting Special Operations agents.

The statute allowed DEA agents to operate virtually anywhere, without permission required from other U.S. agencies. All they needed to do was connect drug suspects to terrorism, and they could arrest them, haul them back to the United States and flip them in an effort to penetrate “the highest levels of the world’s most significant and notorious criminal organizations,” as then-Special Operations chief MaltzDerek Maltz told Congress in November 2011.

As they crunched the massive amounts of intel streaming into the DEA’s Counter Narco-Terrorism Operations Center in Chantilly, Virginia, the agents on Operation Titan, Perseus and the other cases began to connect the dots and map the contours of one overarching criminal enterprise.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Ivanka Trump will be interviewed on @foxandfriends.

5.6K 2.3K 12K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 2h

Remember, Republicans are 5-0 in Congressional Races this year. The media refuses to mention this. I said Gillespie and Moore would lose (for very different reasons), and they did. I also predicted “I” would win. Republicans will do well in 2018, very well! @foxandfriends

9.5K 5.3K 23K

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Fri 4/14/2017 5:41:42 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: White House not releasing visitor logs -- Tough talk from Ronna Romney McDaniel -- Adelson, Ricketts take aim at Club for Growth

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/14/2017 01:36 PM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Friday afternoon.

PRESIDENT TRUMP is at his golf club in West Palm Beach, per pooler Ashley Parker of the Washington Post <http://bit.ly/2ouVk6Z>

BIG NEWS -- ZEKE MILLER SCOOP -- "The White House Will Keep Its Visitor Logs Secret": "The Trump Administration will not disclose logs of those who visit the White House complex, breaking with his predecessor, the White House announced Friday.

"The decision, after nearly three months of speculation about the fate of the records, marks a dramatic from the Obama Administration's voluntary disclosure of more than 6 million records during his presidency. The U.S. Secret Service maintains the logs, formally known as the Workers and Visitors Entry System, for the purpose of determining who can access to the 18-acre complex. White House communications director Michael Dubke said the decision to reverse the Obama-era policy was due to 'the grave national security risks and privacy concerns of the hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.'

"Instead, the Trump Administration is relying on a federal court ruling that most of the logs are 'presidential records' and are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Three White House officials said they expect criticism of the new policy, but believe it is necessary to preserve the ability of the president to seek advice from whomever he wants, 'with some discretion.' They requested anonymity to discuss the policy before a formal announcement." <http://ti.me/2oz7JZz>

TIME TO PUT UP -- "RNC chair to GOP: show you can govern or lose in 2018," by Washington Examiner's Al Weaver: RNC "chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel believes it is time for Republicans to move into governing mode and predicted that failing to keep promises would hurt the party in next year's midterm elections. ... 'It's hard to win if you don't govern. If you make these promises, it's going to be hard for us to win in the midterms,' McDaniel said." <http://washex.am/2nMBKpG>

GET SMART FAST -- BRUCE MEHLMAN emails us the things to watch in the second quarter of the Trump presidency, including the looming shutdown battle and the House Freedom Caucus' battle with Donald Trump <http://politi.co/2nMJLLF>

TRUMP INC. -- "Complaints aside, charities plan to stick with Trump's Mar-a-Lago," by Palm Beach Post's Alexandra Clough: "Mar-a-Lago long has been an oasis for charities and their patrons during Palm Beach's winter charity season. Ticketed guests sipped champagne by the pool, strolled garden paths and reveled in the pageantry of the estate's grand ballrooms and Old World charm. But this past season, Mar-a-Lago's tropical pathways turned from soothing to slippery, as charities learned that politics and philanthropy are poor bedfellows. ...

"But in interviews with numerous charities, donors, event planners and venues, it now seems that most, if not all, charities will stay put at Trump properties for the 2017-18 winter season. This is the case even if Trump's policies appear to contradict the very causes for which the charities seek to raise money." <http://bit.ly/2nMSAoD>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Tax reform, skills and workforce development and infrastructure investment are some of the keys to unlocking inclusive American economic growth. Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Annual Shareholder letter <http://politi.co/2oNllkR> *****

FRIENDLY FIRE -- The pro-Trump 45Committee, which is backed by Sheldon Adelson and Joe Ricketts (<http://wapo.st/2nN68QS>) is taking aim at Bob Gray, one of the Republican candidates in the Georgia special election, and the Club For Growth in a new ad. The ad slams the Club for Growth for attacking Trump and saving Planned Parenthood <http://bit.ly/2nMQd5e> (h/t Rob Pyers, who spotted the ad)

READING TEA LEAVES -- "Tuesday's House Race in Highly Educated Georgia District Could Provide a Lesson," by WSJ's Dante Chinni: "Tuesday's special election in Georgia's 6th District could tell us a lot about how deep the education divide runs through America's two main political parties. The 6th District is one of the best-educated congressional districts in the country, and the data show that makes it an outlier for the Republican Party. Of the 10 congressional districts with the highest percentage of college-educated voters, Republicans captured only one in 2016: Georgia 6. Those numbers suggest Democrat Jon Ossoff, the front-runner in a field of more than a dozen candidates, may have a demographic wind at his back in the district." <http://on.wsj.com/2nNbAmQ>

MORE LEAKS -- "Major Leak Suggests NSA Was Deep in Middle East Banking System," by WIRED's Andy Greenberg: "FOR EIGHT MONTHS, the hacker group known as Shadow Brokers has trickled out an intermittent drip of highly classified NSA data. Now, just when it seemed like that trove of secrets might be exhausted, the group has spilled a new batch. The latest dump appears to show that the NSA has penetrated deep into the finance infrastructure of the Middle East-a revelation that could create new

scandals for the world's most well-resourced spy agency.

"Friday morning, the Shadow Brokers published documents that-if legitimate-show just how thoroughly US intelligence has compromised elements of the global banking system. The new leak includes evidence that the NSA hacked into EastNets, a Dubai-based firm that oversees payments in the global SWIFT transaction system for dozens of client banks and other firms, particularly in the Middle East. The leak includes detailed lists of hacked or potentially targeted computers, including those belonging to firms in Qatar, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Syria, Yemen, and the Palestinian territories. Also included in the data dump, as in previous Shadow Brokers releases, are a load of fresh hacking tools, this time targeting a slew of Windows versions." <http://bit.ly/2oyKazT>

MEDIAWATCH -- INTERVIEW WITH CNN'S RACHEL SMOLKIN -- "Meet the woman who brings CNN's political coverage to the web," by Poynter's Ben Mullin <http://bit.ly/2nN7Z8n>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Sky high approval ratings for Charlie Baker -- Rohrabacher wades into Catalonia independence <http://politi.co/2nMOop3>

MISSION CREEP? -- "US sends dozens of troops to Somalia," my Military Times' Andrew deGrandpre: "Dozens of American military personnel have arrived in Somalia to support local forces battling al-Qaida loyalists active throughout east Africa in what appears to be an extension of U.S.-led counter-terror mission there." <http://bit.ly/2nN9fZ9>

ON THE FRONT LINES -- "Witnessing an ISIS Drone Attack," by Ben Solomon in NYT <http://nyti.ms/2nMSgGv>

FOOD FOR THOUGHT -- "The federal workforce hasn't grown much in the last 50 years," by Axios' Lazaro Gamio <http://bit.ly/2nMsD8t>

FLASHBACK -- One of the best headlines POLITICO has ever run, in honor of this weekend's Easter Egg Roll: "'Bees are good,' Obama says as children scream" <http://politi.co/2nMTTDT>

SPOTTED -- WaPo restaurant critic Tom Sietsema last night at the new DC hot-spot restaurant Mirabelle on 16th Street ... HHS Secretary Tom Price on the 12:23 Delta flight from DCA to ATL. He is seated in seat 10C, comfort plus.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION -- NEW STAR WARS TRAILER <http://bit.ly/2oySC24>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Optimistic about the future of America's economy, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon believes we need effective public policy and for business to play a role in developing solutions that spur economic growth and benefit every American. Learn more in his Annual Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2nMe9kq> *****

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To: Biesecker, Michael[MBiesecker@ap.org]; Pace, Julie[JPace@ap.org]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 10:10:09 PM
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Adding Julie Pace, again. We have answered your questions with the following on-the-record statements.

“A similar security sweep was done for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA’s Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA’s expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Biesecker, Michael [mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 5:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Also confirming that you decline to comment on the specific questions in yellow below ...

From: Biesecker, Michael
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:27 PM

To: 'Wilcox, Jahan' <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Again, we are willing to include the details of the similar spending under Lisa Jackson, but we don't have immediate access to EPA's records. Please provide the details of the spending to which you refer. Otherwise, we will be left to say we couldn't immediately verify the charge you claim. Could you at least provide the date, amount and contractor so we can try to check it out?

Also, just to clarify, is it you on-the-record contention that Pruitt in no way requested the bug sweep, but that this was an independent decision made solely by the EPA Protective Service Detail? Can you say concretely whether the administrator was even aware of the decision?

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:16 PM
To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Julie and Michael – below are the answers in bold.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 1:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Julie and Michael -

Jahan,

Could you please clarify how electronic surveillance would potentially imperil Administrator Pruitt's physical security?

“Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA's Protective Service Detail.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Also, we have not seen and, depending on the amount, don't have access to what was spent on a bug sweep under Lisa Jackson, but I'm interested in reporting that out. Can you provide the documentation on that, including the date, amount and the name of the vendor?

“Please ask your source, who apparently has access to the database of EPA's expenditures.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:29 PM

To: Pace, Julie <JPace@ap.org>; Biesecker, Michael <MBiesecker@ap.org>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Julie and Michael -

Below are our on-the-record responses in bold that you can attribute to me.

From: Biesecker, Michael [<mailto:MBiesecker@ap.org>]

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 11:47 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Bug sweeping, biometric locks

Liz, Jahan,

AP will be publishing a story about \$3,000 in taxpayer funds expended in April for a contractor to sweep Administrator Pruitt's office for electronic listening devices. We will also be reporting on spending to install biometric locks in his suite.

When coupled with the previously reported purchase of the privacy booth, it raises questions about why Pruitt feels the need to invest in counter-surveillance measures that none of his predecessors felt were necessary. EPA headquarters is a secure building with armed security and metal detectors at the entrances. Pruitt also has his personal security detail. Is the administrator concerned about the potential for electronic spying against him by the agency's own employees?

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and while the Associated Press attempts to trivialize his safety, there is nothing nefarious about security decisions made by EPA's Protective Service Detail." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

As part of the same story, we will also be mentioning the \$120,000 Definers contract and the FOIAs filed by America Rising targeted at EPA employees viewed as potentially disloyal to the Trump administration. Please provide any comment you have on those issues.

"Definers was awarded the contract to do our press clips at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services. This year, EPA has received over 10,000 public information requests from journalists and individuals across the political spectrum and we're responding to them in a manner that is fair and efficient."

If you have questions regarding how Definers operates, we encourage you to contact them.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Thanks,

Michael



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michael Biesecker

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Reporter

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Have a tip for the Associated Press? We have a secure way to send it to us, anonymously. Follow this link for instructions: www.ap.org/tips

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“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe – the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.” -- Mark Twain, 1906

"I go with Custer and will be at the death." – AP reporter Mark Kellogg's final dispatch from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

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To: Kevin Bogardus[kbogardus@eenews.net]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:19:24 PM
Subject: RE: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Kevin Bogardus [mailto:kbogardus@eenews.net]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

Hey everyone,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

I'm working on a piece about Definers Corp.'s contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>). I had a few questions about this, which are:

-- How did this contract happen? Did Definers approach EPA first or did EPA approach Definers first?

-- What services will Definers be providing EPA? Will Definers be providing "war room" services to EPA (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3d6ea3_c21da991906e440eba09e35b63bbcc10.pdf)?

-- A search of [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) shows that Definers' contract with EPA is Definers' first contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/AdvancedSearch.aspx?sub=y&ST=C&FY=2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011>). Is that accurate?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Also, since I'm working from home today, please email me here or call my cell phone at 202-247-7844. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News Reporter

kbogardus@eenews.net

202-446-0401 (p)

202-247-7844 (c)

202-737-5299 (f)

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EnergyWire, ClimateWire, E&E Daily, Greenwire, E&ENews PM, E&ETV

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/21/2017 3:30:33 PM
Subject: APPROVAL: LA Times questions -- civil service

Feel free to add RJ to this if we think we need to run this past him.

“We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was plotting his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she

found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt’s decision to partner with states to protect the environment. “Southerland questioned Pruitt’s belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of ‘running roughshod over states’ rights.” ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn’t want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. “Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as ‘productive and cordial’ and said he’s hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. ‘We don’t believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,’ Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour.” ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. “Trump’s fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this spring, as they traditionally have done.” ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House’s Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. “First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president’s budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.” ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama’s budget received 1 vote. “President Obama’s budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season.” ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama’s budget. “President Obama’s budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House’s rejection in March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama’s budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year.” ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress to ignore the budget. “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected priorities that “aren’t necessarily ours.” ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Fri 8/11/2017 8:04:04 PM
Subject: Automatic reply: Update on Definers

I am currently out of the office, returning Monday, August 14, 2017. During my absence, if you need immediate assistance, please contact Julia Valentine at 202-564-2663. Thank you, George Hull

To: Hupp, Millan[hupp.millan@epa.gov]; Hupp, Sydney[hupp.sydney@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]
Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Wed 5/17/2017 9:45:27 PM
Subject: RE: EPA News Highlights for 5/17
05.17.2017 EPA News Highlights v2.docx

All – Please see the updated version attached – missed the WSJ editorial in the first document.

-

Wall Street Journal: Editorial: The Pebble Mine Victory

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is wasting no time broadcasting that an era of lawless environmental regulation is over. One of the best signals so far is the agency's agreement last week to let the Pebble Mine project in Alaska proceed through regular permitting and legal order. The **EPA** and Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. announced a legal settlement Friday that finally gives the Pebble Limited Partnership the right to work with the federal government on an environmental analysis of its proposed mine.

From: Graham, Amy
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 5:37 PM
To: Hupp, Millan <hupp.millan@epa.gov>; Hupp, Sydney <hupp.sydney@epa.gov>; McMurray, Forrest <mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov>
Cc: Freire, JP <Freire.JP@epa.gov>; Liz Bowman (Bowman.Liz@epa.gov) <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Jackson, Ryan <jackson.ryan@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA News Highlights for 5/17

Good evening – Attached and below are today's news highlights for the Administrator.

EPA News Highlights 5/17/2017

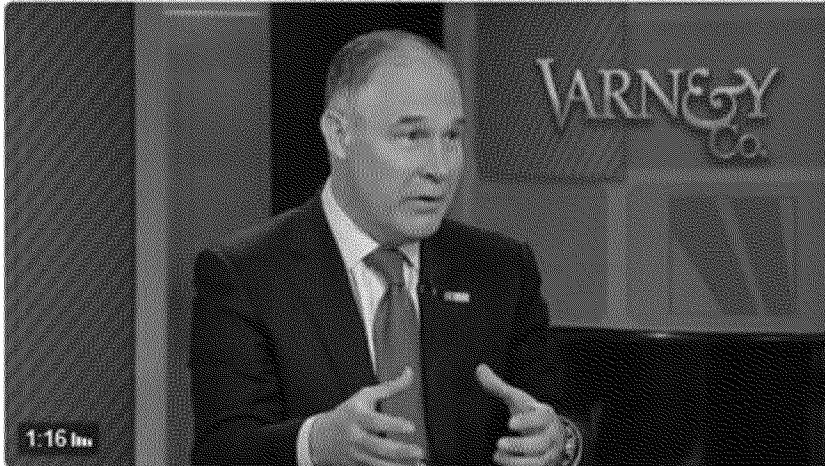
-

Tweets:



Varney & Co. @Varneyco · 4h

@EPAScottPruitt has recently said that #Obama was "no environmental savior." Here's why.



21 112 173



Ainsley Earhardt

@ainsleyearhardt

Follow

EPA Administrator @ScottPruittOK joined us on @foxandfriends to talk about his plan to create clean energy



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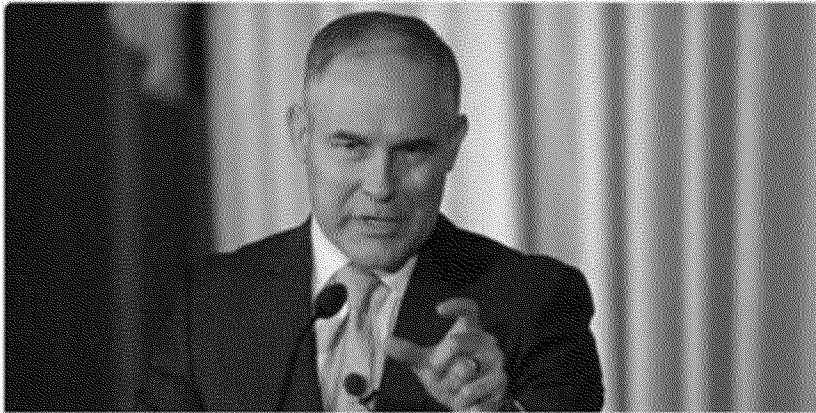
6:57 AM · 17 May 2017

51 51 215



FOX Business @FoxBusiness · 6h

EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America last



EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement Puts America Last

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn't the environm...

foxbusiness.com

5

45



40

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News clips:

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Need to Know Network: EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Scott Pruitt**, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday. Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the **EPA** has been slow to respond, citing “a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that’s taken the **EPA** 27 years to make a decision.”

Fox Business: EPA’s Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a “bad business deal.” “Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn’t take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period,” he said.

Washington Times: Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump's G-7 visit

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit... The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Pruitt said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site was unacceptable.

Newsmax: Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, **EPA Director Scott Pruitt** said Wednesday... Meanwhile, **Pruitt** said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the **EPA** did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

E&E News: Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said... Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

E&E News: GOP attorneys general pan 20 EPA rules

A group of Republican attorneys general are urging the Trump administration to target the Clean Power Plan and a host of other **U.S. EPA** air quality rules for possible changes or elimination in the course of a broader review. "During the Obama administration, we experienced first-hand the devastating effects of unlawful executive overreach on jobs and our states' local energy economies," West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey (R) and seven other attorneys general wrote this week in comments for an **EPA** "regulatory reform" task force.

Politico: BARRASSO: PRUITT 'VERY RESPONSIVE'

Senate EPW Chairman John Barrasso told ME Tuesday that **Pruitt** has been "very responsive" to oversight requests from his office. "We've got the right person in that position doing a great job," he said. That stands in stark contrast to the panel's ranking member Tom Carper, who told ME a day earlier he'd only received responses back to two of his 15 letters seeking information. Barrasso said he expected to call **Pruitt** to the Hill for hearings on the agency's budget and for oversight of the Toxic Substances Control Act in the coming weeks.

Politico: Carper slams Pruitt over inadequate answers on climate plans

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt responded to a letter from nearly two dozen Senate Democrats seeking details on his plans to review the Clean Power Plan with little more than copies of two press releases and a publicly available letter, drawing a sharp rebuke from Sen. Tom Carper.

The Daily Caller: Rep. Hunter: Sewage spilling into the US from Mexico is making our border patrol agents sick

GOP California Rep. Duncan Hunter wrote a letter in May to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and head of the **EPA Scott Pruitt**, urging the two to take action on the sewage spill in Tijuana that is pouring into the U.S. and apparently making Border Patrol agents ill. Hunter drew attention to the massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River that is still moving through San Diego County, and in the letter sent May 9, he noted that it's important to bring attention to the affects on Border Patrol agents and Navy SEAL members, not just the environmental impact of the spill.

Full Articles:

-

Need to Know Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/epa-administrator-promises-to-clean-up-toxic-waste-sites-obama-left-behind/>

EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

5/17/17, 11:45AM

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, said that President Trump is

committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday.

Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the EPA has been slow to respond, citing “a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that’s taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision.”

“I think when you look at the environmental left, they look at the past administration as an environmental savior,” Pruitt told *Fox and Friends*.

“This president is a doer, he’s an action-oriented leader,” Pruitt said. “The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually doing things to clean up the environment.”

Pruitt noted that nearly 40 percent of the country, roughly 120 million Americans, is living in areas that don’t meet air quality standards. Fox News’ Ainsley Earhardt asked Pruitt if people living near these sites could get cancer if they are exposed to chemical around these sites.

“Quite possibly, yes,” Pruitt responded. “That’s why it’s so important to focus the core of the mission on those areas.”

Fox News’ Steve Doocy asked Pruitt how much this cleanup would cost the American taxpayers.

“The great thing about this is we have private funding. There are people out there responsible for these sites to clean up,” Pruitt said, noting that the money is there to clean up these toxic waste sites.

“It’s not a matter of money,” he said. “It’s a matter of leadership and attitude and management, and we need to do it much better.”

Fox Business

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/2017/05/17/will-trump-controversies-stall-epa-s-aggressive-agenda.html>

EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

By Nick Giampia 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn't the environmental "savior" that Democrats made him out to be and why the U.S. needs to part ways with the Paris Climate Agreement.

"When you look at Superfund sites, which are sites across the country that have land waste Uranium and Lead 1322 sites across the country that's more than when President Obama came into office, so it increased under his watch... The areas that he focused on as far as CO2, he struck out twice before the U.S. Supreme Court, they struck him down as far as the actions he took," he said on FOX Business' Varney & Company.

Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a "bad business deal."

"Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn't take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period," he said.

Washington Times

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/17/scott-pruitt-paris-agreement-decision-come-after-d/>

Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump's G-7 visit

By Sally Persons 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit.

“I think probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I’m actually attending the G-7 in early June, there will be a decision on Paris. Very important that we make steps there soon,” Mr. Pruitt said on Fox News.

Mr. Trump is set to meet with the G-7 May 26-27.

The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Pruitt said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site was unacceptable.

“We’re very focused on West Lake,” he said. “We have a plan in place that we’re going to announce very soon on West Lake.”

Mr. Pruitt also said the cleanup will be funded primarily by private funds dedicated to cleaning up these sites.

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/scott-pruitt-epa-trump-paris-climate/2017/05/17/id/790624/>

Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

By Sandy Fitzgerald | Wednesday, 17 May 2017 09:04 AM

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, EPA Director Scott Pruitt said Wednesday.

"It's very important we make decisions there soon," Pruitt told Fox News' "Fox & Friends" program, indicating the announcement will likely come in early June.

Trump promised during his presidential campaign to pull the United States out of the U.N. accord, which was reached in 2015 to combat climate change. If the United States leaves the agreement, it will join just two other countries — Syria and Nicaragua — in being off the list, The Washington Post reports.

Meanwhile, Pruitt said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the EPA did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

"[There is] a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision," said Pruitt. "Not to clean it up, but to make a decision on what should be done to clean it up."

In addition, "almost 40 percent of the country" has areas that don't meet federal air quality standards, affecting some 120 million people, said Pruitt.

"We had Gold King in Colorado, Flint in Michigan with water, Superfund sites across the country," said Pruitt. "We are very focused on East Chicago, a site that has lead."

Pruitt said that while much of the talk in Washington now surrounds the president's controversies with the FBI, Trump is "providing leadership in so many areas, but it gets lost in the Washington D.C. malaise."

Meanwhile, taking decades to make a decision is "unacceptable," said Pruitt. "Get St. Louis cleaned up."

There is funding available for the cleanup efforts, said Pruitt, and there are people responsible for getting the work done.

"It's not a matter of money," he said. "It's a matter of leadership and attitude and management. We need to do it much better."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/05/17/stories/1060054672>

Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

By Kevin Bogardus 5/17/17

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said today that the Trump administration will decide on whether to remain in or withdraw from the Paris accords after this month's meeting of world powers.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" this morning, Pruitt said President Trump will likely make a decision on the climate change agreement after the Group of Seven summit.

"I think that probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June as well, there will be a decision on Paris," Pruitt said. "Very important that we make steps there soon."

As a candidate, Trump pledged to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, but so far his

administration has yet to take action. The White House said originally that Trump would decide before the G-7 summit, but that decision has since been pushed back.

Pruitt is one of the voices in the administration arguing for an exit from the climate change deal, but others have advocated staying in the agreement in an attempt to modify its terms.

Asked whether the American public needs to focus on safety and jobs, not "memos and what's happening in the White House" — in reference to allegations that Trump interfered with the FBI investigation of Mike Flynn, his former national security adviser — the EPA chief said the president has shown leadership.

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said.

Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

"The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually taking steps to do things to clean up the environment," Pruitt said.

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/05/17/stories/1060054709>

GOP attorneys general pan 20 EPA rules

By Sean Reilly 5/17/17

A group of Republican attorneys general are urging the Trump administration to target the Clean Power Plan and a host of other U.S. EPA air quality rules for possible changes or elimination in the course of a broader review.

"During the Obama administration, we experienced first-hand the devastating effects of unlawful executive overreach on jobs and our states' local energy economies," West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey (R) and seven other attorneys general wrote this week in comments for an EPA "regulatory reform" task force.

Their letter, addressed to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, asks him to consider 20 rules for "repeal, replacement or modification." Besides the Clean Power Plan, intended to reduce electricity producers' emissions of greenhouse gases, the list includes EPA's 2015 standard for ground-level ozone, the update to the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, and recent changes to the agency's program to reduce regional haze at national parks and wilderness areas. It also asks the agency to reconsider its Clean Water Act jurisdiction rule.

"We welcome the opportunity to participate in the process of scaling back these unlawful regulations, restoring the rule of law, and ultimately returning key decisions about energy production and priorities to the states and their citizens," the letter adds. The signers include Mike Hunter (R), who was appointed to succeed Pruitt as Oklahoma's attorney general.

The letter is among more than 60,000 comments so far posted on Regulations.gov in response to President Trump's March executive order requiring EPA and other agencies to identify regulations that get in the way of job creation, have compliance costs that outweigh benefits or are otherwise "outdated, unnecessary or ineffective."

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Rather than proposing specific rules for the chopping block, however, thousands of individuals have appealed to Pruitt to leave existing air and water rules untouched or instead make them tougher (*Climatewire*, May 17). One rural Minnesota resident, for example, urged EPA to consider further tightening the 70-parts-per-billion ozone standard; another recalled the New York City metropolitan area's "horrendous" air quality decades ago and called it a sin to abandon the regulations that had cleaned it up.

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Politico

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/05/senate-gop-starts-regulatory-revamp-push-today-022867>

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By Anthony Adragna 5/17/17

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Politico

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seeking details on his plans to review the Clean Power Plan with little more than copies of two press releases and a publicly available letter, drawing a sharp rebuke from Sen. Tom Carper.

"Either Mr. Pruitt mistakenly believes that forwarding past press releases is a sufficient response or he doesn't have a plan to protect Americans from greenhouse gas emissions," Carper, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, told POLITICO in a statement accompanying a copy of Pruitt's response.

"The job of the EPA is to protect public health and the environment," Carper added. "To Mr. Pruitt, I say do your job."

In their original April 7 letter, 23 Senate Democrats asked Pruitt to explain how he'd go about dismantling the Clean Power Plan and what kind of rule he would put in its place, given the agency's obligation to regulate greenhouse gases. They also asked for copies of all documents "related to any decision you take in EPA's review or under the Executive Order with respect to the Clean Power Plan."

That letter further asked Pruitt for the scientific sources he used as the basis for his (false) conclusion during a March television appearance that carbon dioxide is not the primary driver of global warming. Pruitt's response included a paragraph explaining President Donald Trump's late March executive order and nothing more of substance.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA is reviewing the Clean Power Plan to decide whether to suspend, revise or rescind the rule.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/17/rep-hunter-sewage-spilling-into-the-us-from-mexico-is-making-our-border-patrol-agents-sick/>

Rep. Hunter: Sewage spilling into the US from Mexico is making our border patrol agents

sick

By Jonah Bennett 5/17.17

GOP California Rep. Duncan Hunter wrote a letter in May to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and head of the EPA Scott Pruitt, urging the two to take action on the sewage spill in Tijuana that is pouring into the U.S. and apparently making Border Patrol agents ill.

Hunter drew attention to the massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River that is still moving through San Diego County, and in the letter sent May 9, he noted that it's important to bring attention to the affects on Border Patrol agents and Navy SEAL members, not just the environmental impact of the spill.

"Compounding the environmental, economic and public health ramifications, it is imperative to highlight the negative impact this situation is having on our military and border enforcement personnel," Hunter wrote in a letter obtained by The Daily Caller News Foundation. "Individuals with the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Navy SEAL teams perform their responsibilities throughout this area on a daily basis. The current spill, as indicated in the pictures I've enclosed, is significant and has increased their risk for exposure to a multitude of diseases and pollutants."

"I have personally received reports of Border Patrol agents falling ill, being forced to leave their shifts and seek medical attention, possibly even putting their families at risk when these agents return home following events of exposure," Hunter continued. "Additionally, I am aware of critical military operations and exercises in the area being suspended because of the harmful conditions and risk the current spill poses."

For Hunter, the sewage seeping into the U.S. represents a drop in national security because of suspended military exercises.

The February sewage incident in Mexico occurred because of the collapse of a major sewage trunk line, and Hunter claims that Mexico is barely doing anything to clean up the mess in the aftermath. Moreover, Mexican officials never even informed the U.S. of the spill. At least 28 million gallons of raw sewage flowed into the Tijuana River earlier this year, but in actuality, that amount could be as high as 256 million gallons.

As such, Hunter wants the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency directly involved in “resolving this situation,” as the International Boundary and Water Commission effort is insufficient.

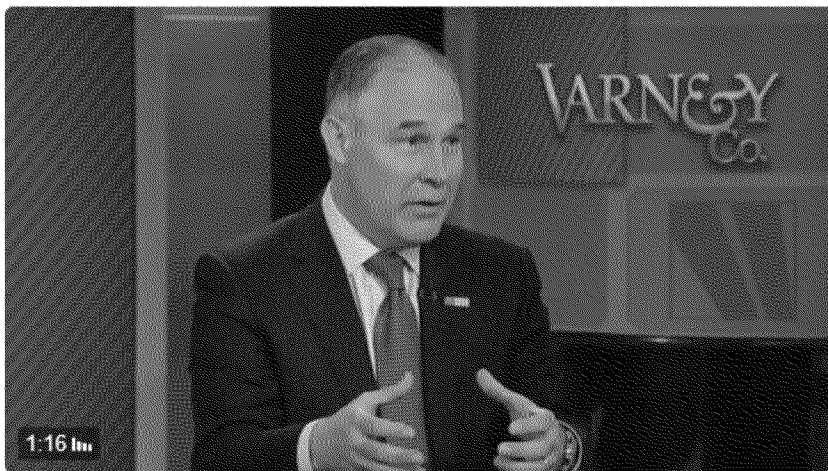
EPA News Highlights 5/17/2017

Tweets:



Varney & Co. @Varneyco · 4h

.@EPAScottPruitt has recently said that #Obama was "no environmental savior."
Here's why:



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EPA Administrator @ScottPruittOK joined us on @foxandfriends to talk about his plan to create clean energy



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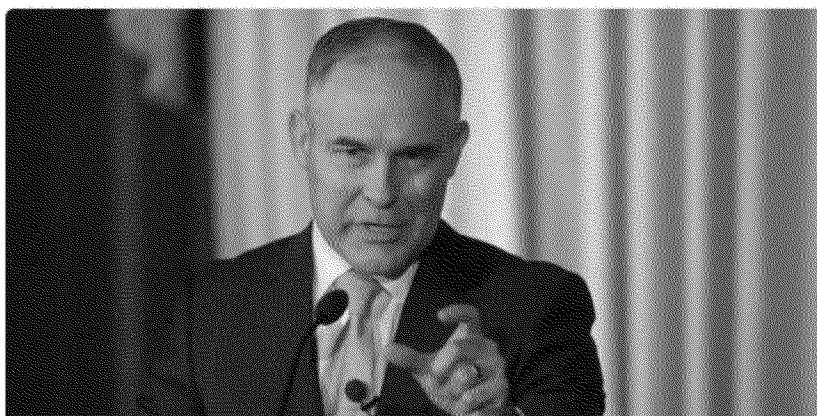


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EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America last



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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn't the environm...

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News clips:

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Need to Know Network: EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Scott Pruitt**, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday. Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the **EPA** has been slow to respond, citing "a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the **EPA** 27 years to make a decision."

Fox Business: EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a "bad business deal." "Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn't take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period," he said.

Washington Times: Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump's G-7 visit

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator **Scott Pruitt** said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit... The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. **Mr. Pruitt** said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site was unacceptable.

Newsmax: Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, **EPA Director Scott Pruitt** said Wednesday... Meanwhile, **Pruitt** said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the **EPA** did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

E&E News: Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said... Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

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Full Articles:

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-pebble-mine-victory-1494976868>

Editorial: The Pebble Mine Victory

EPA Settles a lawless, pre-emptive veto of an Alaska Project

May 16, 2017 7:21 p.m. ET

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is wasting no time broadcasting that an era of lawless environmental regulation is over. One of the best signals so far is the agency's agreement last week to let the Pebble Mine project in Alaska proceed through regular permitting and legal order.

The EPA and Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. announced a legal settlement Friday that finally gives the Pebble Limited Partnership the right to work with the federal government on an environmental analysis of its proposed mine. The Obama Administration stripped Pebble of that right in February 2014 when it issued a pre-emptive veto of what could be America's largest copper and gold mine. Pebble sued on solid legal grounds.

The Clean Water Act gives the Army Corps of Engineers the primary job of evaluating development projects. EPA can perform a secondary review and veto a project—though only with cause. The Obama EPA developed its own fictional model of a mine and then vetoed the project before Pebble had a chance to go through the Corps's review.

Documents from freedom of information suits and legal discovery showed that EPA officials orchestrated opposition to the mine with environmental activists and native tribes. The other victim of this campaign was the state of Alaska, which owns the mine site but was cut out by the EPA.

The EPA's pre-emptive veto was the first in the history of the Clean Water Act, and a damaging precedent. It positioned the agency to become a superregulator able to kill any bridge, mine, pipeline or oil well before companies could make a case. Mr. Pruitt's reversal will unleash capital that has been on strike due to arbitrary regulation. No sane investor would risk years of financial and legal hardship in light of the federal treatment of Pebble, the Keystone XL pipeline or the Shell Arctic development.

The EPA agreement offers no guarantee that the Pebble Mine will be approved after state and federal reviews. But at least Alaska and Pebble stakeholders can get a fair hearing from a transparent federal process.

Need to Know Network

<http://ntknetwork.com/epa-administrator-promises-to-clean-up-toxic-waste-sites-obama-left-behind/>

EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

5/17/17, 11:45AM

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday.

Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the EPA has been slow to respond, citing "a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision."

"I think when you look at the environmental left, they look at the past administration as an environmental savior," Pruitt told *Fox and Friends*.

"This president is a doer, he's an action-oriented leader," Pruitt said. "The past administration talked a lot. This administration is actually doing things to clean up the environment."

Pruitt noted that nearly 40 percent of the country, roughly 120 million Americans, is living in areas that don't meet air quality standards. Fox News' Ainsley Earhardt asked Pruitt if people living near these sites could get cancer if they are exposed to chemical around these sites.

"Quite possibly, yes," Pruitt responded. "That's why it's so important to focus the core of the mission on those areas."

Fox News' Steve Doocy asked Pruitt how much this cleanup would cost the American taxpayers.

"The great thing about this is we have private funding. There are people out there responsible for these

sites to clean up," Pruitt said, noting that the money is there to clean up these toxic waste sites.

"It's not a matter of money," he said. "It's a matter of leadership and attitude and management, and we need to do it much better."

Fox Business

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/2017/05/17/will-trump-controversies-stall-epa-s-aggressive-agenda.html>

EPA's Pruitt: The Paris Climate Agreement puts America Last

By Nick Giampia 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt on Wednesday said that former President Barack Obama wasn't the environmental "savior" that Democrats made him out to be and why the U.S. needs to part ways with the Paris Climate Agreement.

"When you look at Superfund sites, which are sites across the country that have land waste Uranium and Lead 1322 sites across the country that's more than when President Obama came into office, so it increased under his watch... The areas that he focused on as far as CO2, he struck out twice before the U.S. Supreme Court, they struck him down as far as the actions he took," he said on FOX Business' Varney & Company.

Pruitt wants the U.S. to play a role in reducing pollution, however, believes that the Paris Agreement is a "bad business deal."

"Paris represents an agreement that puts America last... Paris represented a situation where China and India went ahead and didn't take any steps to address CO2 reductions, while we front loaded our cost, contracting our economy 2.5 trillion dollars in gross domestic product over a 10 year period," he said.

Washington Times

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/17/scott-pruitt-paris-agreement-decision-come-after-d/>

Pruitt: Paris Agreement decision to come after Trump's G-7 visit

By Sally Persons 5/17/17

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wednesday that President Trump will make a decision on whether to stay in the Paris Agreement after he returns from the G-7 summit.

"I think probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June, there will be a decision on Paris. Very important that we make steps there soon," Mr. Pruitt said on Fox News.

Mr. Trump is set to meet with the G-7 May 26-27.

The EPA director also said his agency will soon have a plan regarding the West Lake Landfill outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Pruitt said the failure to deal with this radioactive waste site was unacceptable.

"We're very focused on West Lake," he said. "We have a plan in place that we're going to announce very soon on West Lake."

Mr. Pruitt also said the cleanup will be funded primarily by private funds dedicated to cleaning up these sites.

Newsmax

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/scott-pruitt-epa-trump-paris-climate/2017/05/17/id/790624/>

Scott Pruitt: Trump Decision on Paris Climate Accord Likely After G-7 Summit

By Sandy Fitzgerald | Wednesday, 17 May 2017 09:04 AM

President Donald Trump will likely announce his decision whether to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement when he returns from the Group of Seven summit at the end of this month, EPA Director Scott Pruitt said Wednesday.

"It's very important we make decisions there soon," Pruitt told Fox News' "Fox & Friends" program, indicating the announcement will likely come in early June.

Trump promised during his presidential campaign to pull the United States out of the U.N. accord, which was reached in 2015 to combat climate change. If the United States leaves the agreement, it will join just two other countries — Syria and Nicaragua — in being off the list, The Washington Post reports.

Meanwhile, Pruitt said Wednesday that while former President Barack Obama was considered "an environmental savior," the EPA did not take steps "at all" to clean up numerous sites around the country, posing "great risk" to citizens in those areas.

"[There is] a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the EPA 27 years to make a decision," said Pruitt. "Not to clean it up, but to make a decision on what should be done to clean it up."

In addition, "almost 40 percent of the country" has areas that don't meet federal air quality standards, affecting some 120 million people, said Pruitt.

"We had Gold King in Colorado, Flint in Michigan with water, Superfund sites across the country," said Pruitt. "We are very focused on East Chicago, a site that has lead."

Pruitt said that while much of the talk in Washington now surrounds the president's controversies with the FBI, Trump is "providing leadership in so many areas, but it gets lost in the Washington D.C. malaise."

Meanwhile, taking decades to make a decision is "unacceptable," said Pruitt. "Get St. Louis cleaned up."

There is funding available for the cleanup efforts, said Pruitt, and there are people responsible for getting the work done.

"It's not a matter of money," he said. "It's a matter of leadership and attitude and management. We need to do it much better."

E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/05/17/stories/1060054672>

Pruitt expects Paris decision after summit

By Kevin Bogardus 5/17/17

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said today that the Trump administration will decide on whether to remain in or withdraw from the Paris accords after this month's meeting of world powers.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" this morning, Pruitt said President Trump will likely make a decision on the climate change agreement after the Group of Seven summit.

"I think that probably after the president gets back from the G-7, and I'm actually attending the G-7 in early June as well, there will be a decision on Paris," Pruitt said. "Very important that we make steps there soon."

As a candidate, Trump pledged to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, but so far his administration has yet to take action. The White House said originally that Trump would decide before the G-7 summit, but that decision has since been pushed back.

Pruitt is one of the voices in the administration arguing for an exit from the climate change deal, but others have advocated staying in the agreement in an attempt to modify its terms.

Asked whether the American public needs to focus on safety and jobs, not "memos and what's happening in the White House" — in reference to allegations that Trump interfered with the FBI investigation of Mike Flynn, his former national security adviser — the EPA chief said the president has shown leadership.

"They want leadership, and this president is providing leadership in so many areas, and it gets lost in Washington, D.C.'s malaise in all these areas," Pruitt said.

Pruitt also touted his efforts to expedite cleaning up toxic waste sites in the Superfund program and repeated his claim that the Obama administration was no "environmental savior."

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E&E News

<https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2017/05/17/stories/1060054709>

GOP attorneys general pan 20 EPA rules

By Sean Reilly 5/17/17

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"The job of the EPA is to protect public health and the environment," Carper added. "To Mr. Pruitt, I say do your job."

In their original April 7 letter, 23 Senate Democrats asked Pruitt to explain how he'd go about dismantling the Clean Power Plan and what kind of rule he would put in its place, given the agency's obligation to regulate greenhouse gases. They also asked for copies of all documents "related to any decision you take in EPA's review or under the Executive Order with respect to the Clean Power Plan."

That letter further asked Pruitt for the scientific sources he used as the basis for his (false) conclusion during a March television appearance that carbon dioxide is not the primary driver of global warming. Pruitt's response included a paragraph explaining President Donald Trump's late March executive order and nothing more of substance.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA is reviewing the Clean Power Plan to decide whether to suspend, revise or rescind the rule.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/17/rep-hunter-sewage-spilling-into-the-us-from-mexico-is-making-our-border-patrol-agents-sick/>

Rep. Hunter: Sewage spilling into the US from Mexico is making our border patrol agents sick

By Jonah Bennett 5/17.17

GOP California Rep. Duncan Hunter wrote a letter in May to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and head of the EPA Scott Pruitt, urging the two to take action on the sewage spill in Tijuana that is pouring into the U.S. and apparently making Border Patrol agents ill.

Hunter drew attention to the massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River that is still moving through San Diego County, and in the letter sent May 9, he noted that it's important to bring attention to the affects on Border Patrol agents and Navy SEAL members, not just the environmental impact of the spill.

"Compounding the environmental, economic and public health ramifications, it is imperative to highlight

the negative impact this situation is having on our military and border enforcement personnel,” Hunter wrote in a letter obtained by The Daily Caller News Foundation. “Individuals with the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Navy SEAL teams perform their responsibilities throughout this area on a daily basis. The current spill, as indicated in the pictures I’ve enclosed, is significant and has increased their risk for exposure to a multitude of diseases and pollutants.”

“I have personally received reports of Border Patrol agents falling ill, being forced to leave their shifts and seek medical attention, possibly even putting their families at risk when these agents return home following events of exposure,” Hunter continued. “Additionally, I am aware of critical military operations and exercises in the area being suspended because of the harmful conditions and risk the current spill poses.”

For Hunter, the sewage seeping into the U.S. represents a drop in national security because of suspended military exercises.

The February sewage incident in Mexico occurred because of the collapse of a major sewage trunk line, and Hunter claims that Mexico is barely doing anything to clean up the mess in the aftermath. Moreover, Mexican officials never even informed the U.S. of the spill. At least 28 million gallons of raw sewage flowed into the Tijuana River earlier this year, but in actuality, that amount could be as high as 256 million gallons.

As such, Hunter wants the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency directly involved in “resolving this situation,” as the International Boundary and Water Commission effort is insufficient.

To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Mon 12/18/2017 5:53:02 PM
Subject: RE: Weekly Standard Editorial: There's No Scandal at the EPA

Nice.

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2017 12:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Weekly Standard Editorial: There's No Scandal at the EPA

FYI

The Weekly Standard

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

The Editors, 12/18/17

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Designers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the Times in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt’s team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an “authoritarian” regime wanted to “hunt down ideological subversives,” it wouldn’t use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The Times is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that “transparency matters a lot to me” might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often “transparency” only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Lisa Friedman
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 2:14:59 PM
Subject: Re: follow up questions on Definers Public Affairs contract

Hello,
Just following up on my questions from yesterday. Thanks so much,
Lisa

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, The New York Times
202-862-0306 office
202-251-2083 cell
Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com
Twitter: @LFFriedman

On Dec 18, 2017, at 12:38 PM, Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com> wrote:

Hi folks. I have a few follow up questions on the nature of the contract with Definers I hope you can answer.

1. The contract itself notes that it was a sole-source notification, a no-bid contract. Can you explain to me why this qualified as a no-bid contract. Are they the only company that can provide this service? Unique in some way? Is there any written justification that was conducted that you can provide me?

2. You noted in an earlier response to me that in a sole-source notification a notice must be placed on federal websites to other vendors may provide proof of their ability to conduct the services. In this case, you noted, one additional vendor did so. Can you please provide the name and/or response itself of the company that responded?

3. The contract notes that Definers is self-designated as a disadvantaged business. Executives at Definers said they believe that is a clerical error and that they did not purposely claim any disadvantaged status. Can you please explain to me why the company is designated as such, how that came to be, and if any benefits were incurred to the company because of that status.

Thanks so much,
Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:36:36 PM
Subject: RE: contract info

Just tried to call you.

From: Friedman, Lisa [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 10:42 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: contract info

Hi Jahan.

Here's a copy of the contract for Definers Public Affairs

<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>

As you'll see under competition details, it says the contract was not competed, and the reason it gives is "only one source - other."

Under 'numbers of offers received' it says: 1

By contrast, for example, here is the contract with Bulletin. It says under competition details that it was "competed under SAP." (simplified acquisition procedures)

<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=3B728BF9-DC6E-45F1-BF65-BA5E42ACFE4C&AwardID=49688963&AwardType=C>

So - it appears clear here that the contract with Definers was a no-bid contract. If that's not in fact the case, then I'd like to request some explanation as to why it clearly says so on the contract itself.

And if indeed, as the contract states, it was a sole-source notification, then please provide an explanation as to why.

Thanks,

Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Fri 4/14/2017 10:53:49 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: Trump's 'renewed confidence' in the Freedom Caucus -- Rising W.H. stars: Stephen Miller, Gary Cohn -- ANNIE KARNI'S Bob Barnett profile -- SAMANTHA POWER to Harvard -- B'DAY: Nick Merrill

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/14/2017 06:48 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

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Listen to the Playbook Audio Briefing <http://bit.ly/2obE6Ld> ... **Subscribe on iTunes** <http://apple.co/2eX6Eay> ... **Visit the online home of Playbook** <http://politi.co/2f51Jnf>

Happy Friday. The Capital Weather Gang says we're in for a generally beautiful next few days. <http://wapo.st/2otzqkN>

DEEP SPLIT -- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, in an interview with the Wall Street Journal, said he believes he'll get a deal on health-care reform and has a "renewed confidence" in the House Freedom Caucus, the conservatives who helped torpedo his first attempt to repeal and replace Obamacare. "They want to do the right thing and they do like me and they do like their president," Trump told the Journal.
<http://on.wsj.com/2pgoTJR>

-- **BUT** ... Indeed, people in and around the Freedom Caucus feel confident they can strike a deal with Trump. Other Republicans involved in the talks are not as confident, and say the two sides are no closer to a deal than when they left town for recess. The negotiations are still centered on Obamacare's "Title I" provisions -- a list of baseline coverage requirements. After a handful of raucous town halls this recess, any uptick in Freedom Caucus votes could be matched by moderates abandoning the bill.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Whether Freedom Caucus members like Trump -- some do, some don't -- has little bearing on whether they'll be able to cut a deal. Lots of people liked John Boehner -- until they didn't. This is a numbers game.

ONE WASHINGTON WISE MAN suggested to us that Trump stop negotiating and tell the Freedom Caucus to craft a deal that could pass the House.

SOME IMPORTANT foreign policy stories out this morning:

-- **"N. Korean official: U.S. more vicious, aggressive under Trump,"** by AP's Eric Talmadge in Pyongyang, North Korea: "North Korea's vice foreign minister on Friday blamed President Donald Trump for escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula through his tweets and expansion of military exercises, saying the U.S. was becoming 'more vicious and more aggressive' under his leadership than it had been under President Barack Obama. In an exclusive interview with The Associated Press in Pyongyang, Vice Minister Han Song Ryol also warned the U.S. against provoking North Korea militarily. 'We will go to war if they choose,' he said." <http://apne.ws/2pAcb87>

-- **SOMETHING TO WATCH:** Escalating tensions between Trump and North Korea come as Vice President Mike Pence heads to South Korea this weekend for a 10-day trip in the Asia-Pacific region.

-- **"China is suddenly leaning on North Korea -- and it might be thanks to Trump,"** by John Pomfret in WaPo: "North Korea will celebrate the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il Sung, on Saturday, and some type of military show of force is expected. In an editorial in the semi-official Global Times on Wednesday, Pyongyang was put on notice that it must rein in its nuclear ambitions, or else China's oil shipments to North Korea could be 'severely limited.' It is extraordinary for China to make this kind of threat. For more than a decade, as part of its strategy to prop up one of its only allies, China refused to allow the U.N. Security Council to even consider cutting oil shipments to North Korea. Beijing's calculus was that the maintenance of the North Korean regime took precedence over everything. Now Beijing seems to be reconsidering its position." <http://wapo.st/2osK3UN>

-- **"Trump Said No to Troops in Syria. His Aides Aren't So Sure,"** by Bloomberg's Eli Lake: "Senior White House and administration officials tell me Trump's national security adviser, General H.R. McMaster, has been quietly pressing his colleagues to question the underlying assumptions of a draft war plan against the Islamic State that would maintain only a light U.S. ground troop presence in Syria. McMaster's critics inside the administration say he wants to send tens of thousands of ground troops to the Euphrates River Valley. His supporters insist he is only trying to facilitate a better interagency process to develop Trump's new strategy to defeat the self-described caliphate that controls territory in Iraq and Syria." <https://bloom.bg/2oeB4VM>

A GOOD DETAIL from NYT's Peter Baker in an A1'er on **PRESIDENT TRUMP's** shifting positions: "Mr. Trump sometimes cloaks his evolving positions by declaring victory before retreating. For instance, he had criticized NATO for not fighting terrorism and leaving the financial burden to the United States. As he met with NATO's secretary general on Wednesday, Mr. Trump asserted that the alliance had changed. ...

"But the alliance has hardly changed in three months. Just three more members out of 28 have committed to raise military spending to target levels by next year, and the only shift in NATO's approach to terrorism was to create a new intelligence office before Mr. Trump's inauguration." <http://nyti.ms/2oGxwPJ>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Tax reform, skills and workforce development and infrastructure investment are some of the keys to unlocking inclusive American economic growth. Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Annual Shareholder letter <http://politi.co/2oaMj4Q> *****

PRESIDENT TRUMP is at Mar-a-Lago with no public events scheduled. **VP PENCE** also has no public events scheduled for the fourth straight day.

WHITE HOUSE AIDES RISING -- JOSH DAWSEY and **ELIANA JOHNSON** answer the question that's been hanging out there since Steve Bannon's downfall -- Where in the world is Stephen Miller?: **"Trump's got a new favorite Steve":** "President Donald Trump once affectionately called them 'my two Steves,' a reference not only to their ideological kinship but to their central role in his administration. But while Steve Bannon is on the ropes in Trump's fractious White House, Stephen Miller has managed to endear himself to the man emerging as the president's most indispensable adviser: son-in-law Jared Kushner.

"As the relationship between Kushner and Bannon has deteriorated , Miller has made sure his colleagues know he's not on Bannon's team. In interviews, seven White House officials described the emerging dynamics. The 31-year old speechwriter is now working closely with Kushner's Office of American Innovation, as well as on family leave, childcare and women's issues with Kushner's wife Ivanka Trump, according to several people involved." <http://politi.co/2oG2qYD>

-- **WAPO'S DAMIAN PALETTA** on **GARY COHN**: **"Within Trump's inner circle, a moderate voice captures the president's ear":** "In a White House short on experienced personnel, Cohn has found an edge by hiring two dozen policy experts, most with government experience. His team produced detailed proposals on overhauling the tax code, rebuilding infrastructure, cutting back financial regulations and restructuring international trade deals. He is widely considered a future candidate to be chief of staff. ...

"While friends say he loves his new job, they say Cohn also holds the traditions of Washington in low regard. At a recent dinner with friends in New York, he called Washington a 's---show,' according to a person familiar with the exchange.

"Cohn has not tried to shirk his past at Goldman Sachs or hide his lavish lifestyle. He recently had drinks at the Four Seasons with Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein, and shortly after the failure of the House GOP health-care legislation, he went on vacation in the Bahamas." <http://wapo.st/2p2v6Mt>

THE MILLION-DOLLAR QUESTION -- "If Trump Fired Bannon, Would He Seek Revenge?" by Ben Schreckinger: <http://politi.co/2obCelm>

POMPEO COMING OUT HOT -- "Pompeo mocks microwave surveillance claims," by Nolan McCaskill: "CIA Director Mike Pompeo on Thursday mocked those who fear intelligence officials conduct surveillance through microwaves, saying the agency tries to ignore such claims. While White House counselor Kellyanne Conway suffered blowback last month when she suggested microwaves could be deployed as surveillance devices, the CIA said later Thursday that Pompeo was not directly referencing Conway's controversial comments." <http://politi.co/2nLJIVE>

-- "CIA director labels WikiLeaks a 'hostile intelligence service'," by Martin Matishak. <http://politi.co/2oy6j1b>

BOB BARNETT PROFILE -- "Can Washington's Original Dealmaker Survive Trump?" by Annie Karni: "The churn between presidential administrations is typically the sweet spot for Bob Barnett, the Washington superlawyer who likes to describe himself as the 'doorman to the revolving door.' Outgoing White House officials, from the president on down, are ready to cash in with book deals, sign with speaker bureaus, become paid contributors on cable networks and negotiate potential corporate board and employment opportunities. And Barnett-famous for charging his \$1,250 hourly rate, rather than the 10 to 15 percent commission that literary and talent agents typically take off the top -- has been Washington D.C.'s go-to dealmaker for this kind of work for four decades. ...

"But the Obama and Clinton book deals are being viewed by people in the publishing and agenting business as potentially something of a Barnett swan song. His old-school tactics-a multimillion-dollar book deal for an outgoing government official, coupled with a launch on '60 Minutes' or one of the Sunday shows -- seem out of sync in the age of Trump, a former reality show star who reverse-engineered his presidency by starting with the lucrative book, the branding and the television deals and then worked his way into the Oval Office." <http://politi.co/2oGbm02>

THE JUICE ...

-- SHELDON AND MIRIAM ADELSON gave Sen. Ted Cruz's victory committee \$10,400 each, according to a campaign finance report released yesterday.

-- TOM DONILON resigned from Delta's board "due to other commitments," according to an SEC filing earlier this week. "Mr. Donilon has not advised Delta of any disagreement with Delta on any matter relating to Delta's operations, policies or practices."

-- SAMANTHA POWER, who most recently served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has been named to a joint faculty appointment as the Anna Lindh

Professor of the Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and Professor of Practice at Harvard Law School. For the upcoming academic year, she will also be a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

-- **THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER'S** New York media party. <http://bit.ly/2oGszqd> ...
Slideshow with 78 photos <http://bit.ly/2oGszqd>

Playbook Reads

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PHOTO DU JOUR: An axe being presented to first responders from the I-85 bridge collapse in Atlanta rests on a table during a meeting with President Donald Trump in the Roosevelt Room in the White House on April 13. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

PAGING JEFF SESSIONS -- "Rift opens between the Brown administration and legislators over new marijuana laws in California," by L.A. Times' Patrick McGreevy: "A proposal by the Brown administration to revise marijuana laws in California is drawing backlash from lawmakers and police chiefs who say it would repeal rules approved by the Legislature two years ago and benefit the pot industry over the public. Gov. Jerry Brown wants to merge medical marijuana regulations approved by the Legislature in 2015 with standards set by Proposition 64, an initiative approved in November by California voters that legalizes the sale of cannabis for recreational use." <http://lat.ms/2obHDZI>

COMMONWEALTH WATCH -- "How Donald Trump Blew Up the Virginia Governor's Race: The Democratic primary was teed up for Ralph Northam, then he got a surprise opponent who wants to make it a referendum on the soul of the party," by Kevin Robillard in his Politico Magazine debut, filing from Fairfax, Virginia: "On the campaign trail [Tom Perriello has sounded] like he was running against Trump, frequently calling his GOP presidential campaign 'viciously racist' and pledging to make Virginia a 'firewall' against Trump.

"Perriello's attacks, combined with a bank of goodwill with the former Obama administration, turned the one-term legislator into the darling of the D.C. establishment and earned him profiles in the Huffington Post, Yahoo!, and FiveThirtyEight. He has received the endorsement of seemingly the entire Obama-era White House staff, including Dan Pfeiffer, Neera Tanden, David Plouffe and John Podesta, who says Perriello is offering a 'blueprint' for the future of the party. Last week, he got the backing of the father of the populist progressive moment in Democratic politics: Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders." <http://politi.co/2pdO3eS>

WHAT JAMIE DIMON IS READING -- "J.P. Morgan, Citi Score Big Gains, but Shareholders Want More," by WSJ's Peter Rudegeair, Telis Demos and Emily Glazer: "Some of the nation's largest banks warned Thursday that the benefits investors anticipated from rising interest rates and the election of Donald Trump as president aren't panning out quite as quickly as many had hoped. ... While bank stocks surged in the wake of Mr. Trump's surprise election victory, they have slipped the past month as investors grow more doubtful about whether broad measures like lending growth and profitability will catch up with loftier valuations." <http://on.wsj.com/2pAcwri>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** "It is now more important than ever for the business community and government to come together and collaborate to find meaningful solutions and develop thoughtful policies that create economic growth and opportunity for all." Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2oKtc2G> *****

HMM ... "Trump's Lawyer Can't Account For \$350,000 He Was Accused Of Mishandling: In 1999, Michael Cohen, now the president's personal lawyer, cashed a \$350,000 check from an NHL hockey player. He was supposed to give the money to a woman in South Florida. He didn't, and says he doesn't remember anything about it. To this day, the money is missing," by BuzzFeed's Anthony Cormier. <http://bzfd.it/2oxPIAg>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "Sexual Abuse at Choate Went On for Decades, School Acknowledges," by NYT's Elizabeth A. Harris: "Choate Rosemary Hall, the elite Connecticut boarding school, said on Thursday that at least 12 former teachers had sexually molested -- and, in at least one case, raped -- students in a pattern of abuse dating to the 1960s. ... The parents of a Choate student complained to the school in the early 1980s after their daughter contracted herpes from an English teacher. And in another case, the report describes a student's rape on a school trip to Costa Rica. None of the teachers' actions were reported to the police. In some cases, teachers were allowed to resign after being confronted with evidence of misconduct, and administrators wrote letters of recommendations for teachers who were fired. Choate, in Wallingford, Conn., is a blue-blooded school whose alumni include President John F. Kennedy and his brother Joseph P. Kennedy Jr." <http://nyti.ms/2osU18R>

--FLASHBACK: Boston Globe spotlight team, May 6, 2016, "Private schools, painful secrets: More than 200 victims. At least 90 legal claims. At least 67 private schools in New England. This is the story of hundreds of students sexually abused by staffers, and emerging from decades of silence today." <http://bit.ly/2pApN37>

REMEMBERING DAN ROONEY -- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's Ed Bouchette: "Dan Rooney, who succeeded his father and Steelers founder, Art Sr., as team president and rose to become one of the most powerful and beloved owners in sports, died Thursday at the age of 84. Born Daniel Milton Rooney, he was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2000, making the Rooneys only the second father-son combination to be enshrined. Under his leadership since the late 1960s, the Steelers transformed from lovable losers into a Super Bowl dynasty in the 1970s and remain among the most

successful and popular franchises in the game. ... He fought to give more opportunities for minority coaches to ascend in the NFL, an effort that prompted the adoption of what is known as the Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview at least one minority coach in the process of hiring a head coach." <http://bit.ly/2oeC5Nz>

Playbookers

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SPOTTED: Mark McKinnon in Mansfield, Texas, Thursday for Rep. Joe Barton's town hall with his show "The Circus." ... Former President of the World Bank and Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Bush administration, Paul Wolfowitz yesterday getting out of a cab heading into the Reagan Building -- **pic** <http://politi.co/2oGi9a0> ... Evan McMullin on foot, crossing 14th on G Street, NW, mere blocks from the White House. "So close, yet so far..." ... Former Defense Secretary Ash Carter, on the NYC-to-DC Acela in business class, with a protection detail.

SPOTTED last night at the MPAA for Carol Melton's screening of HBO's "Veep" in advance of Sunday's debut of its sixth season (**trailer:** <http://bit.ly/2pAl6F4>): Tammy Haddad, Tim McBride, Dorothy Kosinski, Cathy Merrill Williams, Rita Braver and Bob Barnett, Didem Nisanci and Bruce Andrews, Bobby Haft, Lisa Barclay, Steve Clemons, Virginia Coyne, Todd Harris and Ieva Augstums, Annie Linskey, Garance Franke-Ruta, Doug Heye, Ryan Williams, Jonathan Capehart and Nick Schmit, Shelby Coffey, Jeffrey Herbst, David Chalian, Ruth Marcus, Jeremy Peters, Betsy Fischer Martin, Gail MacKinnon, Kelley McCormick, Robin Goldman and Kevin Cirilli

SUNDAY SO FAR - NBC's "Meet the Press": Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly ... Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) ... Religion roundtable: Pastor JoAnn Hummel ... Bishop T.D. Jakes ... Rabbi David Saperstein. Panel: Mark Leibovich, Heather McGhee, Andrea Mitchell, former Sen. John Sununu (R-N.H.)

--CBS' "Face the Nation": David McCullough. Religion panel: Rod Dreher, Russell Moore, Abigail Pogrebin, Father James Martin ... Political panel: David Ignatius, Amity Shlaes, David Nakamura, Jamelle Bouie ... A discussion on chiefs of staff and the presidency: Ken Duberstein, Denis McDonough, Chris Whipple

--"Fox News Sunday": Power Player: opera singer Renee Fleming. Panel: Michael Needham, Bob Woodward, Jennifer Griffin, Gillian Turner

--CNN's "State of the Union": Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). Panel: Bakari Sellers, Rep. Mia Love (R-Utah), Jason Kander, Bill Kristol

--CNN's "Inside Politics," hosted by John King: Julie Pace, Jonathan Martin, Abby Phillip, Manu Raju

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Nick Yaeger, managing director at POLITICO Focus, and **Mandy Yaeger** have welcomed Luke Michael Yaeger and Hayley Rose Yaeger. They join big brother Hunter (3) and Ella (6). **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2pe3weK>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): CNN's Kyle Blaine (hat tip @KFile) ... CNN's Nathaniel Meyersohn turned 24 ... **(was Tuesday):** Meredith LeBlond Friedman

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Carly Zakin, co-founder and co-CEO of theSkimm - how she's celebrating: "I am the queen of last minute trips. So planning on going to a currently undecided beach. Next year, I will be better at planning things." Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2pAn75z>

BIRTHDAYS: Nick Merrill ... Garrett Haake, an NBC and WUSA alum, is 32, celebrating by getting married to Sara Murray in a week in Austin -- he starts as a Washington correspondent at MSNBC the day after his honeymoon (h/t Ryan Williams) ... Joe Rospars, founder and CEO at Blue State Digital and Obama for America alum ... Steve Glickman, co-founder and executive director at Economic Innovation Group and Obama alum (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Betsy Stewart, VP at Business Roundtable and a Boehner alum ... Sasha Issenberg, who writes for Monocle and Bloomberg Politics and is a sushi guru and the pride of Larchmont, N.Y., is 37 ... Politico rising star Megan Swiatkowski (h/t POLITICO comms team) ... Politico's Ashley Gold ... CRC Public Relations SVP Keith Appell, a long-suffering Mets fan ... Robert M. "Mike" Duncan, former RNC chair and president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity ... best darned pollster in New Hampshire Rich Killion ... AP's Eileen Sullivan ... Anna Van Meter ... Yahoo News' Kaye Foley ... WaPo's Matt Zapotosky ... Amy Brundage, SVP of SKDKnickerbocker ... Adam Hodge, VP at SKDKnickerbocker, is 35 (h/ts Kelley McCormick) ... Treasury alum Stephanie Ma, now an MA student at SAIS ... Ellie Wallace ... Adam Levine, managing editor of CNN's Washington Bureau ... Results for America co-founder and COO David Medina ... CNN video producer Brenna Williams, celebrating by working for the digital team on First Street before heading off to a date at Fiola Mare with boyfriend Jake Wilkins (h/t Jake) ... Noha Georges, chief marketing officer at Deloitte Advisory...

... **Neil Sroka**, comms. director at Democracy for America ... Rep. David Valadao (R-Calif.) is 4-0 ... Shola Farber, co-founder of Tuesday Strategies, which works to increase millennial voter turnout and civic engagement ... media executive Shari Redstone is 63 ... Baltimore-born film, television and theatre producer (and uncle of Irene Sherman) Marc Platt is 6-0 (h/ts Jewish Insider) ... Mark Bryant ... Elizabeth Gore ... Caleb Jones ... Jorge Castro, founder and principal of Castro Strategies LLC and an IRS and Jay Rockefeller alum ... Bloomberg's Emma Angerer ... Liz Fossett ... Elizabeth A. Terrell, senior consultant at Deloitte Digital in Sydney ... John Gauthier of Davis Polk ... Ashok Pinto ... political junkie Stephen Groves ... New Hampshire's third senator, Joel Maiola, senior advisor at McLane GPS and a Judd Gregg alum ... Anne Eisenhower ... Facebook's Dipayan Ghosh, an Obama WH alum, is 29 ... CNBC's Thomas Anderson ... Jeff Schogol of Marine Corps Times ... Ray McAllister ... Mark Bryant ... Laura Keehner

Rigas ... Christopher Lupke ... Frederick Eaton ... Ashley Blayne Candy ... Daniel Freedman ... David Humphreville, the host of the fabulous yearly Christmas shopping party in NYC ... Suzy Hemauer (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Blake Androff, executive director of the House DPCC (h/t Legistorm) ... Pete Rose is 76 ... Brad Garrett is 57 ... Adrien Brody is 44 ... Sarah Michelle Gellar is 4-0 ... Abigail Breslin is 21 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Optimistic about the future of America's economy, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon believes we need effective public policy and for business to play a role in developing solutions that spur economic growth and benefit every American. Learn more in his Annual Letter to Shareholders:
<http://politi.co/2nTquUG> *****

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To: Press[Press@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Rebecca Leber
Sent: Thur 12/14/2017 8:36:29 PM
Subject: Request for comment on Definers contract, deadline end of day

Writing to request comment on federal records showing that the EPA has hired Definers Corp., a PR firm associated with GOP campaigns, on a \$120,000 federal contract to conduct media monitoring.

What work was Definers hired for?

Can you comment on Jahan Wilcox's connections to the staff at Definers, and if he or any other staff played a role in facilitating the contract?

My deadline is end of the day, thank you

Rebecca Leber

To: Lisa Friedman[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:20:07 PM
Subject: RE: Follow up question on MJ story

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Evan.Halper@latimes.com[Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/21/2017 3:40:31 PM
Subject: Here you go - let me know what else you need

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain

...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” (Seattle Times, 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not

receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt’s decision to partner with states to protect the environment. “Southerland questioned Pruitt’s belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of ‘running roughshod over states’ rights.” ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn’t want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. “Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as ‘productive and cordial’ and said he’s hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. ‘We don’t believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,’ Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour.” ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. “Trump’s fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this spring, as they traditionally have done.” ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House’s Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. “First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president’s budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.” ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama’s budget received 1 vote. “President Obama’s budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season.” ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama’s budget. “President Obama’s budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House’s rejection in March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama’s budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year.” ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress to ignore the budget. “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected priorities that “aren’t necessarily ours.” ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM

To: Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under

the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Thur 10/5/2017 3:03:49 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017**

In the morning, President Donald J. Trump will receive his daily intelligence briefing. Later in the morning, the President will meet with Senator Tom Cotton. In the afternoon, the President will meet with the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee. Later in the afternoon, the President will participate in a briefing with Senior Military leaders. In the evening, the President and the First Lady will have dinner with Senior Military leaders and their spouses.

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: NBC

Print: Real Clear Politics

Radio: WWI

EDT

9:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

10:00AM THE PRESIDENT receives his daily intelligence briefing

Oval Office

Closed Press

11:45AM THE PRESIDENT meets with Senator Tom Cotton

Oval Office

Closed Press

**3:00PM THE PRESIDENT meets with the Chairwoman of the
Republican National Committee**

Oval Office

Closed Press

6:00PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a briefing with Senior Military leaders

Cabinet Room

In-House Pool Spray (Final Gather 5:50PM – Briefing Room Doors)

7:30PM THE PRESIDENT and THE FIRST LADY have dinner with Senior Military leaders and spouses

Blue Room

Closed Press

Briefing Schedule

2:00PM Press Briefing with Press Secretary Sarah Sanders

White House Briefing Room

On Camera

###

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To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Hull, George
Sent: Mon 8/14/2017 8:43:18 PM
Subject: RE: Update on Definers

Here is an update from my end. Julia Valentine and I continued to work with the contracts officers on moving this forward last week. Contracts had raised several questions we resolved. Definers will need to be on a list of approved contractors for EPA to award the contract. I'm working with them to get them the information on how to get on that list. I'm also working with contracts to address any questions contracts has about the sole source justification for this contract. I will keep you updated as we move forward. - George

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2017 4:10 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Update on Definers

I have been told by contracts that this is slated to be awarded on September 19 – will check in with George on Monday regarding a remaining issue.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2017 4:04 PM

To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Update on Definers

George –

I know you are on vacation (or out of the office) so no need to respond but where are we on Definers doing all of our clips? Hope you have a great weekend.

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Influence
Sent: Thur 6/29/2017 7:04:44 PM
Subject: POLITICO Influence, presented by the Association of American Medical Colleges: Sugar, corn lobbies praise Trump's tweet (not that one) — Property Casualty Insurers Association adds Ledoux — Hogan Lovells signs Ecuador

By Theodoric Meyer | 06/29/2017 03:02 PM EDT

With David Beavers and Aubree Eliza Weaver

SUGAR, CORN LOBBIES PRAISE TRUMP'S TWEET (NO, NOT THAT ONE): Before President **Donald Trump** insulted **MSNBC's Mika Brzezinski** on Twitter this morning, he sent out another, less incendiary tweet that made sugar and corn lobbyists happy. "New Sugar deal negotiated with Mexico is a very good one for both Mexico and the U.S.," Trump tweeted. "Had no deal for many years which hurt U.S. badly." The deal, announced earlier this month by Commerce Secretary **Wilbur Ross**, addresses long-running complaints from the U.S. sugar industry accusing Mexico of unfair trade practices.

- Sen. **Pat Toomey** (R-Pa.), **The Wall Street Journal's** editorial board and other conservative voices have bashed the deal. "I disagree-the new sugar deal hikes prices for consumers even more," Toomey tweeted at Trump today. But the sugar and corn refining lobbies side with Trump. "America's sugar producers thank President Trump and his team for defending U.S. jobs, supporting America's sugar farmers, and holding Mexico accountable for breaking U.S. trade law," **Phillip Hayes**, a spokesman for the **American Sugar Alliance**, said in a statement. "The President is right, this is a very good deal," **John Bode**, the president and chief executive of the **Corn Refiners Association**, said in a statement of his own. "It strengthens protections for U.S. Sugar while also protecting U.S corn sweetener exports and the 4,000 jobs those exports support."

PROPERTY CASUALTY INSURERS ASSOCIATION ADDS LEDOUX: The **Property Casualty Insurers Association of America** has hired **Chris Ledoux** as vice president of federal policy. He previously worked on insurance issues at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and before that worked for the Treasury Department's Financial Stability Oversight Council. He also worked for the Senate Banking Committee in 2012 as Congress was reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program - experience that could come in handy as Congress works to reauthorize the flood insurance program this year, a top priority of the association.

HOGAN LOVELLS SIGNS ECUADOR: **Hogan Lovells** has signed Ecuador's Unidad de Análisis Financiero y Económico, or financial and economic analysis unit. The firm will provide Ecuador with "counsel and assistance on matters concerning, and discussions with, the United States government, including those in relation to the foreign principal's exchange with the United States Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network" and other agencies, according to a Justice Department filing. The filing was first spotted by **O'Dwyer's**.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Heads up: PI is taking July 3 and 4 off for the holiday. We'll be publishing as usual on Friday, and, we'll be back Wednesday, July 5. Got a tip in the

meantime? **Give me a shout:** tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow me on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

CORRECTION: PI misstated the name of the public affairs firm that **Steven Cohen** is joining in Wednesday's edition. It is the **Hawthorn Group**. We regret the error.

PITCOCK LEAVING AS PENCE'S CHIEF OF STAFF: "Vice President **Mike Pence's** chief of staff will depart the White House in the coming weeks and will be replaced by a long-serving aide, in the first major staff change of his office, officials said on Thursday," **The New York Times' Maggie Haberman** reports. "Mr. Pence's chief of staff, **Josh Pitcock**, will be replaced by **Nick Ayers**, a veteran political operative from Georgia who has been working with the vice president for three years. ... Mr. Pitcock's departure, scheduled for August, is voluntary. He has worked for Mr. Pence for 12 years, including running the Indiana governor's Washington office." That's made him a natural point of contact for lobbyists in an administration with a limited number of familiar faces. [Full story.](#)

SENATE REPUBLICANS FACING BARRAGE OF HEALTH CARE ATTACK ADS: "Senate Republicans heading home for the July Fourth recess are flying into a barrage of practically unanswered TV ads assailing their party's health care plans," **POLITICO's Kevin Robillard** reports. "The high-intensity ad campaign is part of a broader Democratic effort for the congressional recess, when they hope constituent pressure will turn Republican senators against the GOP health care bill, which was unveiled and quickly delayed in the last week. ... Essentially, the only Republican group airing ads in support of the Senate proposal has been **America First Policies** - and the pro-Trump nonprofit used those most of those ads to scold [Nevada GOP Sen. **Dean] Heller** for not backing the bill, before pulling the ads down on Tuesday.

- "Meanwhile, **AARP**, progressive groups like **Community Catalyst** and **Save My Care**, and others opposed to the GOP plan have spent at least \$5.6 million in June on ads. The progressive campaign has targeted Nevada and other states with GOP senators from West Virginia to Alaska. America First, according to media buying sources, spent about \$300,000 scolding Heller and another \$100,000 on a thin-spread cable ad buy attacking eight Democratic senators." [Full story.](#)

**** A message from the Association of American Medical Colleges:** The ER shouldn't be your doctor's office. But that's what will happen if the Senate's bill becomes law, leaving millions uninsured. Without sufficient coverage, people often delay getting the care they need. This can turn a manageable condition into a life-threatening and expensive emergency. Tell the Senate to keep Americans covered: aamc.org/keepcoverage ******

LAST NIGHT AT THE CAPITOL HILL CLUB: "Lobbyists for the Democratic Republic of Congo [courted] Washington insiders with a dinner at the Capitol Hill Club" last night, **The Hill's Megan Wilson** reports. The event was "spearheaded by **Bob Livingston**, a former Republican congressman from Louisiana, whose firm recently signed a \$45,000 contract to represent the country, according to an invitation to the 'dinner and discussion' [that was] set to last about two and a half hours Wednesday evening. **The Livingston Group's** contract is a small slice of a larger, [\\$5.6 million lobbying and public relations campaign](#) that the DRC recently

began in the United States." [Full story.](#)

LAST NIGHT AT THE TRUMP HOTEL: "President **Donald Trump**, facing dimming approval ratings and a stalled legislative agenda, rolled out his greatest hits on Wednesday evening - ripping into CNN, assailing House Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** and hailing his party's string of special election wins," **POLITICO's Alex Isenstadt** reports. "Before a rapt audience of 300 supporters, major GOP donors and party leaders attending the first fundraiser of his 2020 reelection campaign at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., the commander in chief returned to his comfort zone. ... One organizer estimated that about \$10 million was raised - a sum that will be divided between Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee." [Full story.](#)

BUSINESS GROUPS URGE CONGRESS TO GET ON WITH IT: "Some of Washington's most influential business lobbies ... gave Congress a clear message on tax reform [on Wednesday]: Hurry up," **POLITICO's Colin Wilhelm** reports. "'In the short-term, we urge you to press forward with the adoption of a Fiscal Year 2018 concurrent budget resolution including reconciliation instructions that would aid the swift passage of comprehensive, pro-growth tax reform,' the groups wrote in a [rare joint letter](#) addressed to leaders of both parties in both chambers of Congress. Signing on to the letter were the **Chamber of Commerce**, the **Business Roundtable**, the **National Association of Manufacturers** and the **National Federation of Independent Business**." [Full story.](#)

FORMER LOBBYIST SPEAKS OUT: **Jimmy Williams**, a former lobbyist for the **National Association of Realtors** and **Icahn Associates** who's now the host of the "DecodeDC" podcast, is out with a piece for **Vox** decrying his former profession. "I was a lobbyist between 2003 and 2010 in Washington, DC," [Williams writes](#). "I quit in disgust. Years of legalized bribery had exposed me to the worst elements of our country's political workings. Not even my half-million-a-year salary could outweigh my conscience." This isn't the first time Williams has spoken up about his time on K Street. He [chatted with NPR's "Planet Money" podcast](#) in 2012. But it's not all negative. "I support lobbying and believe it's an essential part of our constitutional right 'to petition the Government for a redress of grievances,'" he writes.

JOB ALERT: The **Internet Association** is hiring a director of cloud computing policy. [Details here.](#)

MEANWHILE, IN CHICAGO: From **The Chicago Tribune's Bill Ruthhart**: "Mayor **Rahm Emanuel** on Wednesday suggested the city's definition of a lobbyist should be redefined, a move that comes after individuals who contacted the mayor through his personal email account [were found in violation](#) of the city's lobbying law. ... 'We cannot collapse a lobbyist and a citizen, and that's what's happened,' said Emanuel, who did not say whether he would seek to change the law himself. 'What has happened here, in the interest of reform, we have lost our perspective.'" The city's ethics board has said it will fine three people for lobbying Emanuel without registering, with at least eight more cases pending. [Full story.](#)

JOBS REPORT

- The **American Gaming Association** is bringing on Chris Cylke as vice president of government affairs. He was previously a senior vice president of government affairs at the **National Music Publishers' Association** and has also worked for the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** and the **Motion Picture Association of America**.

- **Bressler, Amery & Ross** has added **Kim Larsen** as a principal. He'll head up the law firm's new Washington office.

- **Banner Public Affairs** has added **Kelly Miller** as a senior account executive working on technology, aerospace, defense and issue advocacy. She was previously a public affairs manager at **CTIA**.

SPOTTED: At the **West Virginia State Society's** annual "State Birthday Celebration" last night in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, according to a PI tipster: Sen. **Joe Manchin** (D-W.Va.); Reps. **Evan Jenkins** (who is challenging Manchin next year) and **David McKinley**, both West Virginia Republicans; **Patrick Robertson** of **FTI Consulting**; **Mike Fulton** of the **Asher Agency**; **Stephanie Mathias** of **Novartis**; **Ray Smock** of the **Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education**; **Scott Rotruck** and **Mike Garrison** of **Spilman Thomas & Battle**; **Tom Susman** and **Rachel Coffman** of **TSG Consulting**; **Curtis Wilkerson** of **Orion Strategies**; **Malene Smith Davis** of **Capital Caring**; **Chuck Harman** of the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**; and **Linda Cornish** and **Andrea Albersheim** of the **Seafood Nutrition Partnership**.

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Swamp Drainers Foundation (PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

American Federal Lobbying Firm: Saint Juste Germeille
American Federal Lobbying Firm: Samuel Mellus
American Federal Lobbying Firm: Vilcias Ferdinand
Amy Nice: Compete America Coalition
Blank Rome Government Relations: Dakota Creek Industries Inc.
Blank Rome Government Relations: Fraser Shipyards Inc.
Blank Rome Government Relations: HQI Management Inc.
Davidoff Hutcher & Citron LLP: Bridge-it
DeBrunner & Associates Inc.: Coalition of Long Term Acute Care Hospitals
Geoffrey P. Gray: Citigroup Washington Inc.
High Street Strategies LLC: East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Jeffrey J. Kimbell & Associates Inc.: Acadia Healthcare Inc.
Jeffrey J. Kimbell & Associates Inc.: Sorrento Therapeutics Inc.

Kountoupes Denham LLC: U. S. Center for SafeSport
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP: Financial Services Solutions
Posco America Corporation: Posco America Corporation

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:

Mr. James Desmond: Lockheed Martin
Mr. James F. McConnell: CalOptima

**** A message from the Association of American Medical Colleges:** Why are we sounding the alarm on health care? Because no change to the nation's laws should cripple Medicaid or leave millions of people without health coverage and others with only bare bones plans that will be insufficient for their needs. Without coverage, people delay getting the care they need - turning potentially manageable conditions into life-threatening, expensive emergencies. The AAMC and the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals stand united to tell Congress: Keep Americans covered. aamc.org/keepcoverage **

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/06/29/sugar-corn-lobbies-praise-trumps-tweet-not-that-one-221117>

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Good evening, here's a look ahead of our next week. Towards the bottom you'll find some news highlights and grants, just in case there's overlap with any work happening elsewhere.

ITEM 1 (WEEK AHEAD REPORTS):

Thursday, May 18

Media: Interview with Daniel Halper, Weekly Standard
Media: Off-record conversation with Coral Davenport (NYT)
[CANCELED] Speak: Hoover Institute on EPA originalism (canceled due to protesters packing the room)
Call: State Policy Network
Close hold issue: Fiat Chrysler: DOJ possibly filing complaint in Fiat Chrysler case
Close hold issue: Expected EPA and California Air Resources Board approval for VW proposal for emissions modification on vehicles
Internal: Police week messaging supporting our enforcement department

Friday, May 19

Meet: Rep. Pete Olson, TX on Air Pollutants (has an ozone bill) (Photo, release)
Media: Radio interview with Brian Kilmeade
Meet: Kentucky Secretary of Energy and Environment Charles Snavely
Speak: Council for National Policy on EPA originalism (Photo, release)

Monday, May 22, 2017

Speak: Large Public Power Council CEO Meeting - expectation for future environmental regulation and, conversely, the elimination of regulations affecting the electric power industry. It will be important for them to hear what the Administrator looks for in a successful relationship between EPA and public power.
Speak: Congressional Coal Caucus Meeting
Policy: Submit TSCA Implementation Prioritization Rule to OMB
Submit Risk Evaluation Rule to OMB
Expected Pesticide Applicator Rule submission (could be delayed due to budget news)

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Press: Conference call on Budget with OFRA
Capitol Hill visits (Upton, Costa)
Speak: Congressional Western Caucus Meeting
Speak: American Iron and Steel

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Speak: American Exploration & Production Council's (AXPC) Annual Washington CEO Meeting
Meet: Kansas Farm Bureau
Speak: 4th Annual Faegre Baker Daniels "Energy and Environment Symposium"

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Regulatory Reform EO Task Force plan to Administrator

ITEM 2 (EPA ACCOMPLISHMENTS):

Accomplishments:

- ✓ **Published** new webpage on WOTUS
- ✓ **Amplified** President Trump's accomplishment in adding more funding to WIFIA program/Water infrastructure
- ✓ **Announced** a new East Chicago customer service plan as follow-up to East Chicago trip to ensure residents have a voice with EPA
- ✓ **Announced** new job training funding across the country for a Brownfields program
- ✓ **Filed** for abeyance in Clean Power Plan case to ensure enforcement doesn't go into effect
- ✓ **Settled** a court case with Pebble Mine and pledged to follow the rules on issuing a permit to the Alaska mine
- ✓ **Enforced** with DOJ/State of Texas to get Vopak to pay \$2.5m penalty and spend an estimated \$4m to control air emissions at their facility.

News highlights:

Wall Street Journal: Editorial: The Pebble Mine Victory

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is wasting no time broadcasting that an era of lawless environmental regulation is over. One of the best signals so far is the agency's agreement last week to let the Pebble Mine project in Alaska proceed through regular permitting and legal order.

Scott Pruitt signals new post Obama era at EPA with Alaska's Pebble Mine decision

The EPA settled a lawsuit with the Pebble Limited Partnership Friday, reversing a longstanding campaign to stop groundbreaking on a massive copper and gold mine in Alaska's Bristol Bay region. Promising economic news, it signals to industry leaders how Trump's EPA will function.

Need to Know Network: EPA Administrator promises to clean up toxic waste sites Obama left behind

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Scott Pruitt**, said that President Trump is committed to cleaning up the more than 1,300 toxic waste sites that were left behind by President Obama during an interview on Wednesday. Pruitt told *Fox and Friends* that many of these sites pose significant health risks to Americans that are living near them and that the **EPA** has been slow to respond, citing "a site outside of St. Louis called Westlake that's taken the **EPA** 27 years to make a decision."

Buffalo Rising: PUSH Awarded EPA Brownfield Training Funding

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** announced the selection of 14 organizations to receive funding to operate environmental job training programs for local residents. Funded through the agency's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program (EWDJT), the organizations will receive a total of approximately \$2.7 million to help residents learn the skills needed to secure employment in the environmental field.

Daily Signal: Why Conservatives Should Be Excited About New EPA Agenda

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has been in his new role for just over 80 days. He spoke with The Daily Signal about his objectives for the first year, which he says include

“getting back to basics.” Pruitt says the agency needs to do a much better job of respecting individual states and the rule of law, and promoting policies that are pro-jobs, pro-growth, and pro-environment.

Inside EPA: States welcome EPA's delay of pesticide applicators rule

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) is backing EPA's one year delay of an Obama-era rule bolstering training requirements for applicators of certain pesticides, saying more time is necessary to adequately train growers before enforcement begins even though NASDA generally supports the rule. EPA announced in a May 11 press release that Administrator Scott Pruitt is postponing by 12 months the looming May 22 implementation of the previous administration's final rule, which overhauls certification and training

The Pulse: Mobile Bay awarded \$344K EPA grant

The Environmental Protection Agency announced today that the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program will receive a federal grant of approximately \$344,000. “Having a healthy Mobile Bay is vital to the environmental and economic health of America,” said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. “Productive fisheries are the foundation of many coastal communities and they need to be protected, and the National Estuary Program is a place-based program that is helping to protect and restore the water quality and ecological integrity of estuaries of national significance.”

Grants:

Release of High Profile Grants – 30 Day Outlook as of 5/17/17 11:30am - JK

\$56.5 MILLION FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT AND CLEANUP IN 171 COMMUNITIES: EPA plans to announce \$56.5 million in funding of new brownfields assessments and cleanup in 171 communities across the country. List of grantees will be developed internally this upcoming week. Grant funds may be used to address sites contaminated by, or potentially contaminated by, petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum):

- Assessment grants provide funding for a recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites. Recipients will each receive approximately \$200,000 - \$600,000 in EPA cooperative agreement funding.
- Cleanup grants provide funding for a recipient to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per site and up to three sites in a competition cycle.

Timing: **NEW** Projected announcement date is May 31, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$6.8 MILLION FOR DUSABLE PARK REMEDIATION PROJECT: This Cooperative Agreement (CA) provides funding in the amount of \$6,800,000 to the Chicago Park District (CPD) to complete property line to property line screening of the fill material for thorium at the DuSable Park site. CPD will remove and dispose of all thorium contaminated material (thorium source material, thorium product, thorium byproduct material/waste, soil, sediments, debris and fill materials with thorium or thorium byproduct contamination).

Timing: Mid May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$2.5 MILLION FOR SOUTHEAST ROCKFORD SOURCE AREA 7 SUPERFUND SITE: EPA plans to announce an award to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The work to be accomplished is associated with Area 7 Remedial Action (RA) that consist of contractor procurement, preconstruction activities, RA implementation, RA completion and the RA completion report. The overall objective of these tasks is to determine and document that the RA is functioning as designed. The site has been on the EPA national priorities list since 1989.

Timing: Mid May 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$2.43 MILLION FOR GREAT LAKES AREA OF CONCERN RESTORATION: EPA plans to announce This grant provides resources to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to continue its efforts to implement remedial action plans (RAPs) to restore twelve (12) Areas of Concerns (AOCs), and coordinate implementation of the Lakewide Action and Management Plans (LAMPs) for the Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and the Lake St. Clair Comprehensive Management Plan. MDEQ will provide a Lake Coordinator for each of the four Great Lakes in Michigan to strategically identify and develop the priorities, partnerships, projects, and participation necessary to implement each LAMP and represent Michigan on various LAMP management committees, the Great Lakes Executive Committee, and the GLWQA subcommittee task teams. MDEQ will also focus efforts on removing specific Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) within these AOCs and initiate formal actions for delisting AOCs.

Timing: Mid May 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$1.56 MILLION FOR NEW YORK STATE HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT: This agreement is for development and implementation of an authorized hazardous waste management program in New York State to control the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste; to minimize hazardous waste production; and to protect health and the environment from inactive hazardous waste facilities. Activities include permitting, corrective action, inspections, enforcement, computerized tracking, ensuring data quality, and pollution prevention outreach. This will help to preserve and restore the land by reducing waste generation and by managing hazardous wastes properly.

Timing: Late May, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$1.6 MILLION FOR THE ILLIOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY: This Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) provides funds for the management and operation of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) continuing environmental programs while giving flexibility to address its highest priorities, improve performance, achieve savings and strengthen federal/state partnerships. This PPG funds statewide programs to the Bureau of Air, Bureau of Water and the Bureau of Land. The work includes outputs and outcomes associated with managing continuing environmental programs which include activities to protect and maintain air, water, land and data quality.

Timing: Late May, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public

Affairs

\$1.46 MILLION FOR THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: The Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) program assists rural Alaska communities in building drinking water and wastewater systems operations and maintenance capacity in order to protect human health and the environment. On site operations and maintenance support and over the shoulder operator training establish technical capacity and promote compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Timing: Late May, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$1.38 MILLION FOR THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: EPA plans to announce \$1,388,366 for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to support the State's efforts to protect human health and the environment by reducing air pollution and improving water quality through permitting, enforcement, and compliance efforts and watershed management; reducing hazardous waste & improving waste management practices; preserving underground drinking water sources; and ensuring protection of Public Water Supply Systems.

Timing: Week of May 22, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$1.18 MILLION FOR NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: This action approves an increase of \$1,185,038 to the State of North Carolina to assist the State in adopting new drinking water regulations, develop and maintain a water system inventory and database, and perform compliance and enforcement of regulations. The project will help ensure that the State's water supplies are free from contamination which may pose adverse health effects.

Timing: Mid to late May, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associates Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

\$1.15 MILLION FOR SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL: This action approves an increase of \$1,156,250 to the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control which continues support to prevent and reduce pollution, enforce environmental laws, reduce air and water pollution, preserve underground drinking water sources, ensure the safety of public drinking water supplies, manage waste and increase recycling more effectively from creation to disposal in order to protect the environment and health of the citizens throughout the State of South Carolina.

Timing: Week of May 22, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

6. **\$675,083 FOR JOSHUA TEXAS FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE:** EPA plans to announce a one-time Special Appropriation Act Program grant of \$675,083 for the City of Joshua, TX for drainage improvements for their growing city. The funds will help the city install drainage infrastructure

to protect public health and support continued economic development.

Timing: Today, Wednesday, May 17, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

7. **\$343,883 FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL ESTURARY PROGRAM:** EPA plans to announce \$343,883 for the State of North Carolina for its National Estuary Program. These funds will be used to identify, restore and protect the significant resources of the region and continue implementation of the unique management strategies.

Timing: Tomorrow Thursday, May 18, 2017. **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs

To: Dennis, Brady[Brady.Dennis@washpost.com]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:55:58 PM
Subject: RE: definers

Just tried to call you

From: Dennis, Brady [mailto:Brady.Dennis@washpost.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 11:52 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: definers

Hi there,

We might do something short on this Whitehouse/Harris letter asking EPA to cancel its contract with Definers. Just wanted to see if you all wanted to comment in any way?

Appreciate it.

The Washington Post

Brady Dennis

National Staff

Health, Science & Environment

Work: (202) 334-7745

Email: brady.dennis@washpost.com

Twitter: [@brady_dennis](https://twitter.com/brady_dennis)

Stories: <http://wapo.st/2sS5gfK>

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wed 7/26/2017 1:44:03 PM
Subject: RE: Definers?

I think he is still working on funding.

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2017 9:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers?

Has George figured this out yet? Do I need to follow-up with him again?

Liz Bowman

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Office: 202-564-3293

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Thur 4/13/2017 10:51:31 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: WEST WING WHIPLASH -- HUMA ABEDIN fielding book offers -- The Bannon-is-done narrative -- CEOs growing influence on Trump -- MANAFORT resurfaces -- B'DAY: Sen. Bob Casey

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/13/2017 06:46 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

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WEST WING WHIPLASH -- Before: Trump said NATO is obsolete. **Now:** Trump said NATO is a "great alliance." **Before:** Trump said it would be great if the U.S. and Russia could get along. **Now:** Trump says the U.S. and Russia are not getting along, and Rex Tillerson says "There is a low level of trust between our countries." The president intimated that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad consulted Russia before launching a chemical attack on its people. **Before:** The Trump administration's foreign policy mantra was "America First." The U.S. wouldn't promote regime changes in places like Syria. Trump criticized U.S. involvement in the Middle East. **Now:** Trump is involved in the Middle East, and depending on who you talk to, the U.S. government would like to topple Assad ...

... **Before:** China is a currency manipulator and could easily convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. **Now:** China is not a currency manipulator, and its relationship with North Korea is complicated. **Before:** The Export-Import Bank has to be eliminated. **Now:** The Export-Import Bank is important.

... **Before:** Trump says he's moving on from health care. **Now:** He says there will be a vote to repeal and replace Obamacare.

THE REALITY: This is governing on the fly. Gone is the ardent post-election populism --

for now. After weeks of bruising headlines and backlash over some of his administration's more conservative positions, Trump is embracing policy and people that are much more mainstream.

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- HUMA ABEDIN, the longtime aide to Hillary Clinton, is considering offers to write a book, according to multiple people familiar. She has been approached by people interested, but has not made a decision.

JEWISH INSIDER SCOOP -- IVANKA AND JARED AT THE FOUR SEASONS IN WHISTLER FOR PASSOVER -- by Jacob Kornbluh: <http://bit.ly/2pwnMVw>

THE BANNON-IS-DONE NARRATIVE -- JEREMY PETERS and MAGGIE HABERMAN on A13 of the **NYT**: "Mr. Bannon, [President Trump] has told one person, is 'not a team player.' ... Mr. Bannon's allies have already begun discussing a post-White House future for him. On Friday, his main political patron, Rebekah Mercer, the daughter of Robert Mercer, a major Trump donor, holed up in her office at Cambridge Analytica in New York, discussing possibilities for Mr. Bannon should he leave, according to two people briefed on the meeting. Mr. Bannon served on the data-mining firm's board until last summer." <http://nyti.ms/2pbO3cw>

-- **PHIL RUCKER, ASHLEY PARKER and BOB COSTA** talk to 21 sources for this WaPo story: "The man not long ago dubbed the 'shadow president' -- with singular influence over Trump's agenda and the workings of the federal government -- is struggling to keep his job with his portfolio reduced and his profile damaged, according to interviews Wednesday with 21 of Trump's aides, confidants and allies. Some colleagues described Bannon as a stubborn recluse who had failed to build a reservoir of goodwill within the West Wing." <http://wapo.st/2nHAC73>

IT'S NOT JUST BANNON... -- "The best people? Trump's personnel picks haunt him," by AP's Julie Pace: "The tales of Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort and Carter Page -- none of whom still work for Trump -- have created a steady drip of allegations that have clouded [Donald] Trump's early presidency and raised persistent questions about his judgment. At worst, Trump's personnel picks appear to have left his campaign -- and perhaps his White House -- vulnerable to the influence of foreign powers. At best, they expose the long-term implications of his understaffed and inexperienced campaign organization and undermine his promises to surround himself with top notch talent." <http://apne.ws/2oqy5Lt>

JOSH DAWSEY and BEN WHITE on "CEOs gaining power in Trump's White House": "Wall Street titan Stephen Schwarzman has recently taken on a new, informal job: counselor to the president. The CEO of Blackstone Group, who has known Trump for years, has become so close to the president that the two sometimes talk several times a week, covering everything from Chinese trade to tax policy to immigration.

"White House and New York business officials say Schwarzman was critical to Trump keeping the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, also known as the

Dreamers program, with Trump making the decision after a call with the hedge fund billionaire.

"The two also recently chatted at Mar-a-Lago about a possible reorganization of the White House, two people familiar with the meeting say, though the conversation didn't include specific names. Schwarzman's growing influence in Trump's circle is welcome news to New York business leaders and moderate Republicans, who want the president to abandon his nationalist positions and embrace a more non-ideological White House amid lagging poll ratings and infighting dominating the West Wing."

<http://politi.co/2p9r6te>

THE SHIFTS -- "Trump Reversals Hint at Wall Street Wing's Sway in White House," by NYT's Alan Rappeport: "President Trump made three startling economic policy reversals on Wednesday, stepping away from pledges he made as a candidate and even policies he supported only days ago. The shifts confounded many of Mr. Trump's supporters and suggested that the moderate financiers he brought from Wall Street are eclipsing the White House populist wing led by Stephen K. Bannon, the political strategist who is increasingly being sidelined by the president.

"In a series of interviews, Mr. Trump said he no longer wanted to label China a currency manipulator -- a week after telling The Financial Times that the Chinese were the 'world champions' of currency manipulation. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, the president said he no longer wanted to eliminate the Export-Import Bank. And he said that he might consider reappointing Janet Yellen as chairwoman of the Federal Reserve when her term ends next year." <http://nyti.ms/2nHC7IL>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Tax reform, skills and workforce development and infrastructure investment are some of the keys to unlocking inclusive American economic growth. Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Annual Shareholder letter <http://politi.co/2oaMj4Q> *****

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL INTERVIEW -- DIPLOMACY: NOT AS EASY AS YOU'D THINK! -- "Mr. Trump said he told his Chinese counterpart he believed Beijing could easily take care of the North Korea threat. Mr. Xi then explained the history of China and Korea, Mr. Trump said. 'After listening for 10 minutes, I realized it's not so easy,' Mr. Trump recounted. 'I felt pretty strongly that they had a tremendous power' over North Korea," he said. 'But it's not what you would think.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2nHAeFu> ... **Excerpts** <http://on.wsj.com/2o9JE7S> ...

TOP TWEETS -- Daniel Dale (@ddale8): "Here, side by side, is the information provided by the American president and the Chinese president about the same phone call." <http://bit.ly/2p9qSIR> ... **@margbrennan :** "If you're wondering why the US press doesn't have pictures of Secretary Tillerson at the Kremlin, that's because he ditched his press pool"

THE MOSCOW MEETING -- "Tillerson meets with Putin amid deepening tensions

over U.S. missile strikes in Syria," by WaPo's Carol Morello and David Filipov: "The rift between the United States and Russia was laid bare Wednesday when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson held his first direct talks with Russia's president. Their discussions failed to ease deepening tensions over Syria and Washington's demands that Moscow abandon its main Middle East ally....

"The only concession that Tillerson appeared to have extracted from the Russians was that Putin offered to restore a hotline aimed at avoiding accidents in the air over Syria. Russia had suspended that effort after U.S. missile strikes on a Syrian air base following an April 4 chemical weapons attack on a village in rebel territory. Even this tiny success was conditional; Lavrov said the deal would apply only if the United States and its allies targeted terrorists -- not Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's -forces."

<http://wapo.st/2nHRIBq>

FROM 30,000 FEET -- "Suburban G.O.P. Voters Sour on Party, Raising Republican Fears for 2018," by Jonathan Martin and Alex Burns, with an Alpharetta, Georgia, dateline on A1 of the NYT: "A gray mood has settled over conservative-leaning voters in some of the country's most reliably Republican congressional districts, as the party's stumbles in Washington demoralize them and leave lawmakers scrambling to energize would-be supporters in a series of off-year elections. ...

"Interviews with Republican-leaning voters in four suburban districts -- in Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota and New Jersey -- revealed a sour outlook on the party. These voters, mainly white professionals, say they expected far more in the way of results by now, given the Republican grip on power in the capital. In opinion polls, they consistently give Mr. Trump mediocre approval ratings, even as he remains solidly popular with lower-income whites." <http://nyti.ms/2p9hq1Z>

-- **ABOUT GEORGIA:** We're hearing that Republicans are feeling better about their ability to hold Democrat Jon Ossoff to under 50 percent.

-- **ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION: "Nearly \$14M in ads have flooded Georgia's Sixth for special election,"** by Greg Bluestein. <http://on-ajc.com/2oCjbUx>

CAMPAIGN PROMISE TURNS TO REALITY -- "Trump administration moving quickly to build up nationwide deportation force," by WaPo's David Nakamura: "The Trump administration is quickly identifying ways to assemble the nationwide deportation force that President Trump promised on the campaign trail as he railed against the dangers posed by illegal immigration. An internal Department of Homeland Security assessment obtained by The Washington Post shows the agency has already found 33,000 more detention beds to house undocumented immigrants, opened discussions with dozens of local police forces that could be empowered with enforcement authority and identified where construction of Trump's border wall could begin.

"The agency also is considering ways to speed up the hiring of hundreds of new Customs and Border Patrol officers, including ending polygraph and physical fitness

tests in some cases ... But these plans could be held up by the prohibitive costs outlined in the internal report and resistance in Congress, where many lawmakers are already balking at approving billions in spending on the wall and additional border security measures." <http://wapo.st/2oqGQ8x>

TOP-ED -- GEORGE WILL: "What the Freedom Caucus stands for."

<http://wapo.st/2oqzQlr>

PLAYBOOKERS on the Hollywood Reporter's just-published list, "The 35 Most Powerful People in New York Media": Jesse Angelo, Joe and Mika, Dean Baquet, Anderson Cooper, Jeff Fager, James Goldston, Peter Hamby, Ben Smith, Rachel Maddow, Megyn Kelly, Lester Holt, Andy Lack, Noah Oppenheim and Phil Griffin, Don Lemon, Matt Lauer, Savannah Guthrie, Adam Moss, David Remnick, David Muir, David Rhodes, Charlie Rose, Norah O'Donnell, George Stephanopoulos, Jeff Zucker. **See the full list** <http://bit.ly/2o9MvOs> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2o8YLzi>

--"**12 Top D.C. Political Media Stars' Standout Moments**," by Marisa Guthrie: Jim Acosta, David Fahrenthold, Hallie Jackson, Bret Baier, Tucker Carlson, John Dickerson, Jonathan Karl, Andrea Mitchell, Jake Tapper, Chuck Todd, Chris Wallace, Martha Raddatz. <http://bit.ly/2p9FFgq>

THE JUICE ...

-- **FOX NEWS** has hired Ellison Barber as a D.C.-based general assignment reporter. She was previously at WUSA and the Washington Free Beacon.

-- **THE RNC COMMUNICATIONS OPERATION** is getting filled up. **Michael Ahrens** has joined the RNC as a spokesman and rapid response director. He is a veteran of the Rubio presidential and Senate campaigns, the Republican Governors Association and the Romney campaign. **Scott Parker** has been promoted to deputy research director. **Lindsay Jancek** has been promoted to deputy communications director and **Rick Gorka** has been promoted to deputy communications director and will oversee the regional communications, 2018 efforts, and day-to-day in the department. **Ellie Wallace** and **Christiana Purves** are new regional communications directors under Gorka.

-- **FIRST LOOK:** The new docu-series "America Divided" attempts to highlight inequality in America through reports from celebrities. Zach Galifianakis recently discussed political donations and the rise of dark money with former Democratic commissioner of the FEC Ann Ravel. **1-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2o8lviW>

-- **The Judicial Crisis Network** is launching separate new ads thanking President Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) for helping get Neil Gorsuch through the confirmation process with a digital and cable buy with a total spend of more than \$150,000 focused on D.C., Kentucky and Iowa. <http://bit.ly/2nHBfxj>

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is signing a joint resolution dealing designed to ding Planned Parenthood. He is meeting with I-85 bridge first responders. He will then head to Mar-a-Lago.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg depart after a news conference in the East Room of the White House on April 12. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "US Sikhs launch ad campaign that looks to push back on hate," by AP's Steve Peoples: "Their beards and turbans - symbols of equality in a religion that opposes India's caste system - make American Sikhs easy targets for the angry and uninformed. ... The ads, which will air on CNN, Fox News and on TV stations in Fresno, California, home to a large Sikh community, make no mention of the more than 300 hate crimes reported by Sikhs in the U.S. since the 2001 terrorist attacks. Rather, they feature Sikh families explaining how the world's fifth-largest religion, founded in India, aligns with American values." <http://apne.ws/2pbWV1G>

FIRST LOOK - The two ads, part of the million-dollar ad campaign, include "Proud" and "Neighbors," which start airing on national cable on Friday. FP1 Strategies is managing the campaign, AKPD Message & Media made the ads, and Hart Research did the polling. **The ads** <http://bit.ly/2oCaGZB> ... <http://bit.ly/2nHF9GA>

FUN READ -- "A Who's Who List of Agencies Guarding the Powerful," by NYT's Nick Fandos: "Protecting top government officials, from the president to the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, involves a patchwork of more than a dozen federal agencies and offices. ... Specially trained agents from the Justice Department's F.B.I. provide constant protection for [Jeff] Sessions and James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director. Mr. Sessions usually flies on a private government-provided plane as well. At the C.I.A., highly trained and carefully selected agency officers protect its director with a constant presence, even setting up quarters within or near the director's home. Like the attorney general, the director travels on a government-provided jet. And at the Defense Department, special agents from the Army's Criminal Investigation Command ensure that the secretary, Jim Mattis, is kept safe domestically and as he travels the world visiting bases and installations." <http://nyti.ms/2o8tGMh>

ABOUT TRUMP'S HEALTH CARE PLANS -- "Trump dangles Obamacare payments to force Dems to the table," by Dan Diamond and Josh Dawsey: President Donald Trump wants to use a key Obamacare subsidy program as leverage to draw Democrats to the negotiating table on health care, three administration officials with knowledge of

Trump's thinking told POLITICO. Trump could deliver an immediate and fatal blow to the Obamacare marketplaces if he scraps the subsidy program, worth an estimated \$7 billion this year. These cost-sharing subsidies, which help insurers pay medical bills for low-income customers, have been the subject of a long-running lawsuit that the White House could drop at any time. ...

"Two administration officials said the HHS rebuttal was personally ordered by an incensed Trump, who feared that the Times story hurt his negotiating position. Trump took the unusual step of calling HHS Secretary Tom Price to dictate a blistering statement that challenged the story and swiped at Democrats, one senior administration official said." <http://politi.co/2pbuKQp>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** In his recent Annual Shareholder letter, JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon stressed the importance of deepening our investment in infrastructure, noting "Infrastructure should not be a stop-start process but an ongoing endeavor whereby intelligent investments are made continuously." Learn more: <http://politi.co/2oKtc2G> *****

THIS SEEMS... INTERESTING -- MANAFORT WATCH -- "After Campaign Exit, Manafort Borrowed From Businesses With Trump Ties," by NYT's Mike McIntire: "Aug. 19 was an eventful day for Paul Manafort. That morning, he stepped down from guiding Donald J. Trump's presidential campaign ... But behind the scenes, he was busy with other matters. Papers were recorded that same day creating a shell company controlled by Mr. Manafort that soon received \$13 million in loans from two businesses with ties to Mr. Trump, including one that partners with a Ukrainian-born billionaire and another led by a Trump economic adviser.

"They were among \$20 million in loans secured by properties belonging to Mr. Manafort and his wife. The purpose of the loans is unstated in public records, although at least some of them appear to be part of an effort by Mr. Manafort to stave off a personal financial crisis stemming from failed investments with his son-in-law.

"The transactions raise a number of questions , including whether Mr. Manafort's decision to turn to Trump-connected lenders was related to his role in the campaign, where he had agreed to serve for free. They also shine a light on the rich real estate portfolio that Mr. Manafort acquired during and after the years he worked in Ukraine. Mr. Manafort, often using shell companies, invested millions of dollars in various properties, including apartments and condos in New York, homes in Florida and Virginia and luxury houses in Los Angeles." <http://nyti.ms/2oC6Lw6>

OOPS -- "Republican congressional candidate has attacked foreign worker program his companies used extensively," by CNN's Nathan McDermott and Andrew Kaczynski: "Bob Gray, who is running in a tight race to fill Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price's vacant seat in Georgia's 6th congressional district, has said in multiple interviews that the H1-B visa was frequently abused by companies. The visa is meant to allow employers to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations

when there is a shortage of qualified Americans. Yet three companies where Gray has been an executive have applied for and received H1-B visas, according data provided by the Department of Labor. Two of them, Keane and NTT Data Corporation, requested and obtained hundreds of H1-B visas for foreign employees. The third, Maine Point, employed two H1-B employees." <http://cnn.it/2nHONc3>

WATCH OUT PALM BEACH! -- "Undercooked meat. Dangerous fish. Health inspectors zing Trump's Mar-a-Lago kitchen," by Jose Lambiet in the Miami Herald: "Just days before the state visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Mar-a-Lago, President Donald Trump's Palm Beach private club, Florida restaurant inspectors found potentially dangerous raw fish and cited the club for storing food in two broken down coolers. Inspectors found 13 violations at the fancy club's kitchen, according to recently published reports - a record for an institution that charges \$200,000 in initiation fees. Three of the violations were deemed 'high priority,' meaning that they could allow the presence of illness-causing bacteria on plates served in the dining room." <http://hrlld.us/2pbFUoo>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Anchor Roundtable: Savannah Guthrie, Jake Tapper and More on Fake News, Fairness and When Trump Calls Your Phone," by Hollywood Reporter's Marisa Guthrie: <http://bit.ly/2nHuk7i>

-- **"Bill O'Reilly cuts back his schedule,"** by Hadas Gold: "Bill O'Reilly's future with Fox News may still be unclear, but the star of the channel's prime time line up -- and the host with its with the highest ratings -- has quietly made one major change recently: he is now hosting four days a week, instead of five. The 67-year-old O'Reilly has only hosted his program twice on Friday nights over the last five months. And a person familiar with the matter said a new Friday-night spinoff of O'Reilly's show called 'Friday Factor' had been planned but not yet announced, with a rotating group of hosts filling his Friday slot." <http://politi.co/2nHruiE>

-- **"Bret Stephens leaves Wall Street Journal for New York Times,"** by Hadas Gold: "One of the loudest voices against President Donald Trump from The Wall Street Journal's editorial pages is decamping for the competitor across town. Bret Stephens, the Journal's deputy editorial page editor, will be The New York Times' newest op-ed columnist, both papers announced on Wednesday." <http://politi.co/2p92lbit>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Hope Hicks on the phone Wednesday night outside Whole Foods on P Street, NW.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Hillary for America alums John McCarthy, Megan Nashban,

Karuna Seshai and Dominic Lowell hosted 200+ campaign alumni for the two-year anniversary of HFA's launch. It was hosted at Republic Restoratives distillery with the namesake liquor, "Rodham Rye." **SPOTTED:** Adrienne Elrod, Tyrone Gayle, Christina Reynolds, Rob Flaherty, Hans Goff, Ian Sams, Emmy Ruiz, Alex Hornbrook, Allison Zelmon, Mini Timmaraju, Lauren Crawford, Riley Kilburg, Marisa McAuliffe, Pia Carusone, Rachel Gardner, Lorella Praeli, and Rhett Buttle.

TRANSITIONS -- Raul Alvillar is joining Medora Ventures as managing director of its Washington office. Alvillar is former DNC political director and worked in the Obama White House. ... **Jennifer Lauterbach** started on Monday handling Senator John Kennedy's (R-La.) military and foreign relations portfolio. She previously worked for Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.). ...

... **Chris White** has joined the office of Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) as a legislative assistant. He comes from Rep. Jeff Denham's (R-Calif.) office where he also served as an LA. ... **Marcus Peacock** is joining the Business Roundtable as executive vice president. Most recently, he served as a temporary senior adviser to the OMB director during the transition and post-inauguration. He's an EPA and Hill alum.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Cate Cravath Thorin, manager of government affairs for Zimmer Biomet, and **Kilian Thorin**, consultant for CSRA, have welcomed Quinn Grace Thorin, born on Monday, April 3 at 5:58 a.m. at Sibley Hospital. She was 8 lb 7 oz and 20.5 inches long. **Pic** <http://politi.co/2nHtyHn>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Gretchen Andersen, Rep. Vern Buchanan's press secretary

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Taylor S. Gross, former White House spokesman for George W. Bush and co-founder and partner at The Herald Group. How he's celebrating: "While I know the cool answer is to brag to you about some exotic location or froufrou restaurant, the truth is I am spending it with my favorite people-Team Gross! My wife, Amy, our three children and I will likely walk down to Martin's Tavern, one of our favorite spots in Georgetown where we live." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2pbZIba>

BIRTHDAYS: Celinda Lake ... Politico's Jack Smith ... newly married Kate Gaertner, director of strategy and growth at Axios (hat tip: Rachel Schindler) ... Sen. Bob Casey Jr. (D-Pa.) is 57 ... former Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo.) is 84 ... Sujata Mitra, senior director of comms. at HuffPost ... Will Davis, assistant director for gov't relations at The ONE Campaign ... Doug Coutts, COS to Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) ... Geoff "Bean" Embler, SVP of Definers Public Affairs and an America Rising alum ... Nick Schaper, president and CEO of Engage and a U.S. Chamber and Boehner alum, is 39 ... Sally Rose Larson, legislative director for Rep. Doug Collins (R-Ga.) and a Georgetown alum ... Brian Bartlett, SVP of Rational 360, an alum of Ketchum, Romney 2012, and Bush 43 and Cheney WH advance and a small airplane pilot (h/t Jon Clark) ... Human Rights Campaign senior writer Justin Snow ... Jeremy Art in C-SPAN's media

relations shop ... Jonah Cunningham ... Brad Carroll, finance and legal comms manager at Ford and alum of the Ex-Im Bank ... David Stone, EVP for comms and public affairs at NY's Columbia University ... Brad Elkins is 29, wrapping up a busy year on the campaign trail -- serving as campaign manager for Alejandra Campoverdi for Congress; deputy campaign manager for Jason Kander for Senate; and Nevada state director for Martin O'Malley for President. He's celebrating at home in Pasadena, CA with his close friends Janet, Steve, Kelly, and Ari. He'll take a birthday trip up north to Portland soon, where he attended college at Lewis & Clark (h/t Danny Gaynor) ... John Dutton, COS for Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.) ... John Barsa, Bush 43 DHS alum and current member of the DHS "Beachhead" team (h/t Ed Cash) ...

... **Rachel McCleery**, chief comms advisor for Senate Finance Committee Democrats on tax, oversight and investigations, Obama, Stabenow and Dingell alum (h/t Jon Haber) ... Rebecca Pearcey ... Mia Motley of SKDKnickerbocker (h/t Kelley McCormick) ... Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.) is 65 ... Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) is 73 ... Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) is 62 ... Madeleine Levey Lambert, brand, marketing, and comms at EY and Atlantic Council alum (h/t Mallory Shelbourne) ... Steve Ayscue ... Morgan Hitzig ... Stu Barnes of Lesa Sroufe ... Alex Lam, who works on Blockchain product solutions at Paxos ... Chelsea Cole-Kelly, VP at Bain Capital Credit ... Sarah Corley, media relations manager at the Phillips Collection ... Hannah Shtein ... James Kinnard ... Emily Loeb, special counsel at Jenner & Block, an Obama WH alum and the pride of Victoria, Tex. ... Deena Tauster ... Christina Cattarini ... Dick Dadey, executive director of Citizens Union ... Pesach Osina ... John Gallagher, partner at Mercury and Bloomberg alum ... Jessica Erickson ... Jessica Goldstein (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Richard Lipsky ... Stephen Bates ... Janet Ritz ... Michele Mischa Bergeron ... Ryan Cross ... David All ... bandleader/rock musician Max Weinberg is 66 (h/ts Ali and Josh Rogin) ... chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov is 54 ... actress Allison Williams is 29 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Optimistic about the future of America's economy, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon believes we need effective public policy and for business to play a role in developing solutions that spur economic growth and benefit every American. Learn more in his Annual Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2nTquUG> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Thur 10/5/2017 9:43:13 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: Zinke's mixing politics with business draws scrutiny —
Report: Perry took charter flight last week — Federal judge reinstates parts of methane waste rule

By Anthony Adragna | 10/05/2017 05:41 AM EDT

With help from Ben Lefebvre and Darius Dixon

Morning Energy will not publish on Monday Oct. 9. Our next Morning Energy newsletter will publish on Tuesday Oct. 10. Please continue to follow PRO Energy issues [here](#).

MIXING PUBLIC LANDS AND POLITICS: Over the course of his first months in office, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has met with big donors or political groups more than a half-dozen times while on official travel, raising questions about the appropriateness of those habits even if they don't cross any legal red lines, Pro's Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon [report](#). GOP donors shelled out up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with him during a nearly two-hour Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser during a stop on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. Tickets for the fundraiser, which was attended by local party members and elected officials, ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple.

Though ethics watchdogs said Zinke's appearance was legal, they said attending a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct. "It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen. An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor would say if he planned to continue raising funds.

Zinke's not alone: Obama administration officials had their own struggles mixing official business with politics. A watchdog group requested a probe of whether then-Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama re-election campaign RV tour of Colorado. The Office of Special Counsel [found](#) HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius violated the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" in North Carolina. Former Interior chief Sally Jewell said she thought Zinke was within his rights, noting she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#) that she paid her own way to. "If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said.

But some see Zinke's activity as trying to maintain political contacts so can keep his options available for what to do after he leaves the Trump administration. "I think he's definitely got political aspirations, that that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

He's widely seen an attractive candidate for Montana's open-seat governor's race in 2020.

Quotes that keep coming back to ME: "Put another way, just because something is legal doesn't make it right," OMB director Mick Mulvaney wrote last week. "So much of what happens around here is based on appearances. If it just appears wrong, don't do it," Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski told reporters last week.

REPORT: PERRY TOOK CHARTER TOO — LAST WEEK: Energy Secretary Rick Perry took a chartered flight last week from Hazleton Regional Airport in Pennsylvania to the Greater Portsmouth Regional Airport in Ohio one day before HHS Secretary Tom Price resigned last week, Reuters reports, citing "PMH Aviation, the company that runs the Portsmouth airport." Information about the cost of the flight were not available and the agency did not respond to requests for comment. PMH declined to confirm the flight when contacted by ME Wednesday night. But FlightAware has details of a Sept. 28 trip that appears to match Perry's itinerary that day; his tour of a uranium facility started at 8:30 the following morning. After the tour, Perry tweeted that he was headed to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

SPEAKING OF TRAVEL: The Western Values Project told ME it plans to file a complaint in federal court today complaining Interior has not responded to FOIA requests it filed in June asking the extent that Zinke's wife has accompanied him on official work business. Lola Zinke has accompanied her husband on some official trips, either ceremonial events to which she had been officially invited or on trips on which she has paid her way, Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift told ME. And CNN reports Interior's inspector general expanded its existing probe on Zinke's non-commercial travel to also include a summer visit to the Vegas Golden Knights hockey team.

WELCOME TO THURSDAY EVERYBODY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and DOE's Diane Meck was first up to identify Rep. Sala Burton as the lawmaker Nancy Pelosi replaced in Congress. For today: How many — and which — members of Congress replaced their spouses in their seats? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

"I DID NOT SIGN UP TO GO BLOW UP THE MARKETS": Recently minted FERC Commissioner Robert Powelson didn't hold back Wednesday making it clear that he's not going to be a rubber stamp on the Energy Department's grid pricing proposal, and warned against politicizing FERC. According to SNL, the audience gathered for a meeting of the Organization of PJM States broke into a standing ovation when the former longtime Pennsylvania regulator declared, "We will not destroy the marketplace." Powelson, a Republican, reportedly said he wouldn't support a rule that undoes the power markets FERC oversees. "When that happens, we're done. I'm done; I don't need this job," he said, according to SNL. "FERC does not do politics. We don't do energy politics," he also said. "I did not sign up to go blow up the markets."

Something to keep in mind: Organization of PJM States includes state regulators spanning Illinois to New Jersey and down to North Carolina, and its meetings include not only officials from PJM, the nation's largest power market, but consumer counsels from those states and plenty of power companies. PJM is also the market that would be the most affected by DOE's proposed

rule. This is Powelson's crowd.

We need lots of information: Late Wednesday, FERC posted 53 questions and other requests for information as it dives into DOE controversial resiliency pricing proposal, Pro's Darius Dixon [reports](#). The six-page [document](#) splits those questions into categories looking for feedback on rates, the 90-day on-site fuel requirement envisioned by DOE, and how pricing changes would be implemented, among other issues.

METHANE RULE LIVES — FOR NOW: A federal court in California [ruled](#) Wednesday that BLM unlawfully postponed key compliance dates for a methane waste rule in June, effectively putting the rule back on the books for now. Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte said the agency was too late to delay components of the regulation because its effective date had already passed and therefore should have gone through a round of notice-and-comment rulemaking before suspending any part of the rule. Her decision came the same day Interior [proposed](#) an 18-month delay of the methane waste rule as it works to rewrite it. BLM will accept comments on that proposal for 30 days.

**** A message from Chevron:** When an endangered butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery, we protected the habitat and still plant the only thing they eat—buckwheat. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2fVfOTm> **

EPA STRATEGIC PLAN DROPS CLIMATE FOCUS: EPA's priorities for the next four years would no longer make reference to climate change or rules to reduce carbon emissions under a [draft strategic plan](#), Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). The document, which went out to EPA employees Wednesday, instead defines the agency's "core mission" as ensuring clean air, water and land, calls for more "cooperative federalism" and touts the "rule of law and process." Accompanying graphic that went to employees [here](#).

DEMOCRATS OFFERING CLIMATE METRIC BILL: Led by Sen. [Michael Bennet](#), eight Senate Democrats today are introducing [a bill](#) — the Transparent Pollution Accounting Act — that would standardize the metric used across the federal government to quantify the cost of climate pollution. The Trump administration suspended use of the existing social cost of carbon earlier this year, prompting the need for a codified value, the Democrats argue.

WATCH THAT WRAP UP TODAY: Murkowski wants to have Kevin McIntyre, Trump's pick to chair FERC, and Rich Glick, who serves as general counsel to energy committee Democrats, onto the commission before the chamber adjourns for the Columbus Day recess, Pro's Darius Dixon [reports](#).

Barrasso: Baran's renom needs a big offset: If Democrats want to secure a full five-year term for Nuclear Regulatory Commission member Jeff Baran, they're going to have to agree to "a fairly significant, robust [nomination] package for me to agree to allow him through," Sen. [John Barrasso](#) told ME. Democrats have insisted that Baran, a former aide to ex-Rep. Henry Waxman who has been on the commission since 2014, get a new term alongside the confirmations of GOP commission nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright, who were approved by EPW in July.

Barrasso's comments suggest that Democratic support for Caputo and Wright likely isn't enough to get him to go along with Baran, especially considering his frustration with objections to EPA enforcement nominee Susan Bodine. Still, there's not much to hang over the Democrats in the near term: It's a Republican administration with plenty of EPA nominees they don't like, and Baran's seat doesn't expire until June.

ADMINISTRATION SENDS OVER DISASTER FUNDING REQUEST: Officials formally sent over a request for nearly \$30 billion in disaster relief Wednesday that included \$12.8 billion for FEMA's disaster relief fund, \$16 billion for the National Flood Insurance Program and \$576.5 million for the forest service's firefighting fund, Pro Budget and Appropriations Brief's Sarah Ferris reports. That came as San Juan's mayor blasted Trump on Wednesday as the "miscommunicator in chief" and called his visit to the island "insulting."

Murkowski's focused on immediate relief: Murkowski expressed concern about the "slow" federal response to Hurricane Maria and said building a more resilient Puerto Rican grid was secondary to getting the lights back on. "When you think about the extent of a disaster like this, we all want to say, 'Okay, let's improve, let's improve the grid here, let's build the Puerto Rican grid of the future,' but first and foremost—we've just gotta try and clean up," she told reporters. An aide said Murkowski planned to visit the island with other lawmakers next week but that those details are still being finalized.

PHMSA, NOAA PICKS ADVANCE: The Senate Commerce Committee advanced the nominations of Howard Elliott to run PHMSA and Timothy Gallaudet to be No. 2 at NOAA by voice vote Wednesday. Add them to the ever-increasing backlog of nominees waiting for a Senate floor vote.

DEMOCRATS SEEK PROBE OF PRUITT'S SPENDING: Two senior House Transportation Democrats — Peter DeFazio and Grace Napolitano — asked EPA's inspector general in a letter to probe "wasteful" spending by Pruitt on round-the-clock security and a \$25,000 soundproof phone booth. "This culture, which is reflected in travel and lifestyle choices from the president on down, seems to embolden senior, politically appointed officials of the Trump administration to undertake lavish spending of taxpayer dollars for their sole and personal benefit, and not for the benefit of the Americans paying the tab," they write.

Udall considering private plane rider: Sen. Tom Udall, top Democrat on Appropriations subcommittee responsible for EPA spending, told ME he was "exploring" some sort of rider barring officials from private plane travel. "What I end up seeing is there's some very wasteful things going on," he said.

SENIOR E&C MEMBER MURPHY TO RETIRE: Rep. Tim Murphy, who chairs the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight, announced late Wednesday he'll retire at the end of his current term, POLITICO's Rachael Bade, Elena Schneider and John Bresnahan report. The staunchly pro-life Murphy allegedly suggested a mistress get an abortion.

MINE SAFETY PICK ACKNOWLEDGES FAULTS: David Zatezalo, Trump's mine safety pick, told a Senate panel Wednesday he was "not proud of the fact" the coal company Rhino

Resources he used to run got notices of safety violations, Pro Labor's Ian Kullgren [reports](#). He also said he'd have no trouble working with career staff that issued the notices in 2010 and 2011.

ZINKE HEADS TO FLORIDA: Today, the Interior secretary will get a briefing on "infrastructure upgrades and Everglades restoration at Lake Okeechobee." He'll also visit National Park Service sites Friday impacted by recent hurricanes.

CONSERVATIVES FOR CLEAN ENERGY: Hundreds are expected to gather today at the Hyatt Regency for the Conservative Clean Energy Summit. Multiple lawmakers are expected to address the gathering, including Sens. [Mike Rounds](#), [Rob Portman](#) and [Lindsey Graham](#), as well as Rep. [Scott W. Taylor](#). More information [here](#).

Milestone for House climate caucus: There are now 60 members of the House Climate Solutions Caucus with the additions of Reps. [Pete Aguilar](#) and [Mimi Walters](#).

PERRY AIDE ADDS MORE CLIENTS: Jeff Miller, a former adviser to Energy Secretary Rick Perry during his second presidential run, has signed three new clients — including Pacific Gas and Electric, the massive California utility. Miller reported lobbying DOE in the second quarter on behalf of six clients, including AECOM, Lucid Motors (as a subcontractor to Hobart Hallaway & Quayle), the Nuclear Energy Institute, Occidental Petroleum, Southern Company and Valero Energy. He's signed 15 clients since he started lobbying in Washington this year and Perry became DOE chief (h/t [POLITICO Influence](#)).

END OF A (SHORT) ERA: The Rogue EPA Twitter account is going on hiatus, it announced Wednesday. "We started this account to be sure the public knew what was happening at EPA. Now, the world sees...It may be time to take a step back and let others carry the torch for a while. Those of us at the helm, here, are tired," a [couple of tweets](#) said.

QUICK HITS

— Putin Says He'd Drive a Tesla. [Bloomberg](#).

— Interior Department whistleblower resigns, calling Ryan Zinke's leadership a failure. [Washington Post](#).

— Contrary To Original Plan, Atlantic Coast Pipeline May Extend Beyond North Carolina. [WUNC](#).

— Former AG Sorrell Skips Deposition, Sparks War of Words. [Seven Days](#).

— Here's the leaked anti-leak training email sent to DOE staff. [Wired](#).

— Putin says oil cut deal with OPEC could last to end of 2018. [CNBC](#).

— Climate change could nearly triple airplane turbulence in the next decades, study says. [ABC News](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:30 a.m. — CSIS discussion on the future of electrification, Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Ave NW

9:30 a.m. — Sens. Burr and Cantwell hold press conference on Land and Water Conservation Fund, Senate Swamp

9:30 a.m. — Lawmakers hold press conference to discuss the wildfire threat in the West and potential legislative fixes, HVC 110 Studio B

10:00 a.m. — "Powering America: Consumer-Oriented Perspectives on Improving the Nation's Electricity Markets," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

12:00 p.m. — "The Growing Role of Liquefied Natural Gas in Latin America," Atlantic Council, 1030 15th ST NW, 12th Floor

12:30 p.m. — "How Agencies Reverse Policy: Stays, Remands, and Reconsideration," Environmental Law Institute, 1101 K Street, NW, President's Room

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from Chevron:** This is a story about DOERS, butterflies, and buckwheat. In '75, the endangered El Segundo Blue butterfly was found near a Chevron refinery. We protected the habitat and planted the only thing they eat—buckwheat. We're still planting and keeping an eye on our littlest neighbor. Watch the video: <http://politi.co/2fvfOTm> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/10/zinkes-mixing-politics-with-business-draws-scrutiny-024920>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Interior secretary draws flak for mixing politics, official travel [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon | 10/04/2017 07:31 PM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more

than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little B.S."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Justice Department's Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official)

capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips he takes outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then-Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the

Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but travel records Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office found Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also

look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. [Jon Tester](#) next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations, that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah, and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. [Amata Radewagen](#), the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana where he joined Sen. [Steve Daines](#) (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a [major](#) political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign

and another \$10,000 to joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

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Report: Sebelius violated Hatch Act [Back](#)

By Jennifer Haberkorn | 09/12/2012 03:13 PM EDT

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits certain political activity, when she made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" during a speech in her official capacity earlier this year, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel said Wednesday.

The office sent an official report outlining the rare Hatch Act violation and Sebelius's response to President Barack Obama.

The special counsel's office said it "found no evidence that Secretary Sebelius made any other political statements in her official capacity."

During a speech to the Human Rights Campaign Gala in North Carolina in February, Sebelius said North Carolina Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton "needs to be the next governor of North Carolina." She also outlined the Obama administration's accomplishments so far and said, "One of the imperatives is to make sure that we not only come together here in Charlotte to present the nomination to the president, but we make sure that in November he continues to be president for another four years."

The Office of Special Counsel said she made the political remarks in her capacity as a federal employee and thus violated the Hatch Act. If Sebelius had made those remarks in her personal capacity, they would have been acceptable.

After that appearance, Sebelius had the event reclassified from official to political, and done in her personal capacity, in an attempt to avoid a Hatch Act violation. She and HHS also reimbursed the Treasury Department for all the costs associated with the trip. At least some of the cost was picked by the Democratic National Committee, according to the OSC.

But the OSC said the reclassification doesn't mean the violation didn't occur, particularly because the gala was advertised using Sebelius's HHS title.

"OSC concluded that Secretary Sebelius violated the Hatch Act by making extemporaneous political remarks," OSC Special Counsel Carolyn N. Lerner wrote in a letter to President Barack Obama. "As the upcoming elections approach, this report offers an opportunity to remind federal employees of the complex Hatch Act restrictions."

Hatch Act violations against sitting Cabinet secretaries are relatively rare.

"This particular type of violation, where you have a Cabinet secretary speaking at an event, is pretty uncommon," said Scott Coffina, a former associate counsel in President George W. Bush's White House and a partner at Drinker Biddle & Reath. He said there are "a lot of very garden-variety violations," citing federal employees who forward political emails or put up campaign photos.

Republicans immediately criticized Sebelius, and conservative groups called for her dismissal.

But Sebelius told the OSC that the endorsements of Obama and the government were unscripted and a "mistake." OSC quoted her as saying that she "got a little caught up in the notion that the gains which had been made would clearly not continue without the president's reelection."

Sebelius, in her response, said the ruling was "somewhat unfair" and the use of her title amounted to a "technical and minor" violation. She said that OSC should have concluded that the

violation was "corrected" when the event was reclassified as political.

OSC said that by reimbursing the Treasury, she didn't violate rules prohibiting government-funded political events, but it didn't correct the prohibition on making political statements in an official role.

"It is my understanding that the Hatch Act permits Cabinet members to engage in political activities, without regard to location and duty hours, due to the 24-hour nature of our jobs," Sebelius wrote. "I believe that you should have concluded that the consequence of my going 'off script' at an official event was to change the nature of my appearance for cost reimbursement purposes only.

"Keeping the roles straight can be a difficult task, particularly on mixed trips that involve both campaign and official stops on the same day," Sebelius wrote.

Republicans were quick to pounce on Sebelius's violation.

"That the secretary violated federal law in this manner is disturbing, but hardly a surprise," said Antonia Ferrier, spokeswoman for Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). (The law was named after a different Sen. Hatch: Sen. Carl Hatch of New Mexico.)

"Since almost day one, this administration has had a singular focus on politicking — not governing — that's borne out by the secretary ignoring a strict prohibition on electioneering while working for federal taxpayers," Ferrier said.

House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa said Obama should carefully consider how to respond to the report.

"As he decides the appropriate consequences for Secretary Sebelius, the president should consider the important leadership role of Cabinet secretaries and the example they must set for the entire executive branch," he said in a statement.

Conservative advocacy groups said the violation warranted her departure.

"This is the most high-profile example of a Hatch Act violation since the act was passed in 1939," said Dan Epstein, executive director of Cause of Action. "Never before has a member of the president's Cabinet been found to have committed a Hatch Act violation. President Obama should immediately fire HHS Secretary Sebelius for her violation of federal law."

Maureen Ferguson and Ashley McGuire of The Catholic Association said most of Sebelius's actions "have advanced the president's political interests" throughout her tenure. "We already know she is willing to violate the First Amendment rights of Americans for political purposes, so why should we be surprised when she bends other laws to score political points?"

This article first appeared on POLITICO Pro at 3:10 p.m. on September 12, 2012.

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White House to Cabinet: No private air travel without Kelly's approval [Back](#)

By Matthew Nussbaum | 09/29/2017 06:57 PM EDT

The White House cracked down on Cabinet officials' use of private planes Friday, telling them chief of staff John Kelly must approve almost all travel on "government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft," after Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price [resigned](#) over his own taxpayer-funded flights.

Mick Mulvaney, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, sent out the memo soon after Price's resignation was made public. His exit came after [a series of POLITICO reports](#) about his frequent use of private planes to conduct government — [and sometimes personal](#) — business.

"In light of recent events, the President has asked me to remind the heads of all executive departments and agencies of Administration policies on travel," Mulvaney wrote.

He reminded the department and agency heads that, by regulation, "Government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft should not be used for travel by Government employees except with specific justification."

"However, beyond the law and formal policy, departments and agencies should recognize that we are public servants," Mulvaney wrote. "Every penny we spend comes from the taxpayer. We thus owe it to the taxpayer to work as hard managing that money wisely as the taxpayer must do to earn it in the first place."

Mulvaney added: "Put another way, just because something is legal doesn't make it right."

Officials should stick to commercial travel "with few exceptions," he wrote.

In the wake of the controversy, other administration officials' travels have come under scrutiny. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has used military planes for some trips, [POLITICO reported](#), while EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin have also raised eyebrows with their travel itineraries.

President Donald Trump was livid over the Price scandal and accepted his resignation on Friday.

"We have great secretaries, and we have some that actually own their own planes, so that solves that," Trump told reporters earlier on Friday.

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FERC floats dozens of questions on DOE pricing proposal [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 10/04/2017 06:52 PM EDT

FERC opened the floodgates tonight for comments on the Energy Department's controversial resiliency pricing proposal, posting 53 questions and other requests for information about the rulemaking.

The [six-page document](#) signed by FERC's director for energy policy and innovation, groups the questions into broader categories looking for feedback on rates, the 90-day on-site fuel requirement envisioned by DOE, and how pricing changes would be implemented, among other issues.

But many of the questions, which are open to anyone seeking to comment before FERC's initial comment deadline of Oct. 23, are directed at the foundation of DOE's proposal.

For example, DOE's 19-page proposal leans heavily on the grid stresses that occurred during the "polar vortex" to press for new regulatory action. But, FERC doesn't treat the premise as a given. "The proposed rule references the events of the 2014 Polar Vortex, citing the event as an example of the need for the proposed reform. Do commenters agree?"

There are also questions directed at how on-site fuel would address power outages triggered by damage to the electric transmission and distribution system, and several questions seeking to define ostensibly basic information about how the 90-day fuel supply concept should be applied.

WHAT'S NEXT: FERC's initial comment deadline is Oct. 23, with reply comments due Nov. 7.

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Judge says Interior delay of methane waste rule was illegal [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 10/04/2017 07:32 PM EDT

A federal judge [ruled](#) today that the Bureau of Land Management's June postponement of key compliance dates for the methane waste rule was unlawful.

BLM relied on Section 705 of the Administrative Procedure Act to justify the delay. But Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte of the U.S. District Court for Northern California said it was too late because the rule's effective date had already passed. That means BLM should have gone

through a round of notice-and-comment rulemaking before suspending any part of the rule, she said.

Coincidentally, the ruling came on the same day that Interior proposed an 18-month delay of the methane waste rule as it works to rewrite it.

Laporte's ruling acknowledges the pending rulemaking but said it could be months before it is finalized and takes effect, and may not survive its own legal challenge, giving her no reason to pause now.

She vacated the delay and ordered the requirements reinstated. She rejected BLM's arguments that the delay should be kept in place, saying that doing so would create "a free pass for agencies to exceed their statutory authority and ignore their legal obligations under the APA, making a mockery of the statute." And Laporte said any company that misses upcoming January deadlines because of Interior's delay is in "a problem to some extent of their own making."

Laporte previously used similar legal reasoning to strike down Interior's delay of a resource valuation rule.

WHAT'S NEXT: BLM will take public comment for 30 days on its new proposal to delay the methane waste rule.

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BLM proposes 18-month delay to methane rule [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 10/04/2017 09:59 AM EDT

The Interior Department proposed to suspend enforcement of an Obama-era rule on methane emissions for 18 months as it plans to rewrite it, according to a document to be filed tomorrow in the Federal Register.

"The BLM is currently reviewing the 2016 final rule and wants to avoid imposing temporary or permanent compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future," the agency said in the document.

The agency said it is concerned that the final rule analysis "may have underestimated costs and overestimated benefits, and [BLM] is therefore presently reviewing that analysis for potential inaccuracies."

The 2016 rule was intended to require oil and gas developers on federal lands to capture more of the methane that leaked during their operations. The rule went into effect in January 2017 and survived an effort by Congressional Republicans to repeal it.

WHAT'S NEXT: BLM will accept public comments on the proposal for 30 days.

To view online [click here](#).

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Draft EPA strategic plan drops all reference to climate change [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 10/04/2017 04:26 PM EDT

The Trump administration has dropped all mention of climate change or rules to reduce carbon emissions from a strategic plan outlining EPA's priorities for the next four years, according to a draft obtained by POLITICO.

The [draft](#) was circulated around EPA for comment earlier today along with an accompanying one-page [graphic](#).

The document creates a new framework for EPA's mission that reflects the management style of Administrator Scott Pruitt. It defines EPA's "core mission" as ensuring clean air, water and land. It calls for more "cooperative federalism" to empower state governments. And it touts the "rule of law and process," which is meant to "refocus the Agency on its statutory obligations under the law."

The draft was released to EPA employees just days after Pruitt missed a key statutory deadline to implement the 2015 ozone standard. EPA has offered no update on that issue.

"I believe this draft Plan provides the foundation for a more efficient and effective agency, enabling us to accelerate progress and deliver real, tangible results for the American people," Pruitt wrote in an [email](#) to EPA staff today.

The [previous strategic plan](#) released by the Obama administration in 2014 listed climate change as "goal one," along with broader air quality issues. The new draft plan makes no mention of climate change, though it does address non-climate air issues, as well as a litany of other regulatory, permitting and administrative goals for EPA.

WHAT'S NEXT: EPA will publish the draft plan in Thursday's Federal Register and take comments through Oct. 31.

Lorraine Woellert contributed to this report.

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Lorraine Woellert contributed to this report.

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Murkowski pressing to have FERC nominees approved this week [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 10/04/2017 04:17 PM EDT

Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) is aiming to have President Donald Trump's two pending FERC nominees confirmed before the Senate flies off for its recess at the end of the week.

"I was talking with our leadership today about it. I want to try to get it shook loose before we take a break," the Alaska Republican, who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said of the nominees. The Senate is not scheduled to be in session next week.

Kevin McIntyre, Trump's pick to chair the agency, and Rich Glick, who serves as general counsel to energy committee Democrats, were approved by Murkowski's committee on a voice vote last month to become FERC members.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the energy committee, has said she was "favorably impressed" by McIntyre who, when confirmed by the full Senate with Glick, will bring FERC's leadership board back to full strength for the first time since late 2015.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate is scheduled to be on recess for the week of Columbus Day and is rarely in session on Friday, suggesting that the FERC nominees could be confirmed in the next day or so.

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White House seeks nearly \$30B in disaster aid package [Back](#)

By Sarah Ferris | 10/04/2017 06:13 PM EDT

The White House this afternoon formally requested nearly \$30 billion in emergency funding for its ongoing recovery efforts in hurricane-battered regions like Puerto Rico, Florida and Texas.

In a letter to congressional leaders, the Trump administration asked for \$12.8 billion for FEMA's disaster relief fund, \$16 billion for the National Flood Insurance Program and \$576.5 million for the forest service's firefighting fund.

"We need the help of Congress to stabilize the affected communities and replenish dwindling and depleted funds," Office of Management and Budget chief Mick Mulvaney wrote. He said the money should be classified as "emergency spending," meaning it would not require spending offsets.

House and Senate appropriators immediately released statements in support of the White House's request and pledged to act quickly. House Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) said he would "put legislation forward as soon as possible."

Rep. Nita Lowey, his Democratic counterpart on the panel, said she supported Trump's request for FEMA, but added it needed to go further.

"Congress should add to this request by appropriating funding for flexible Community

Development Block Grants; rebuilding coastlines, roads, transit systems, airports, ports, and other infrastructure; small business loans; and repairs to military installations and other federal facilities damaged in the storms," said Lowey, of New York.

The White House's request had previously been reported by POLITICO.

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Embattled GOP Rep. Tim Murphy to retire [Back](#)

By Rachael Bade, Elena Schneider and John Bresnahan | 10/04/2017 02:44 PM EDT

Rep. Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania announced Wednesday that he will retire at the end of his term, after allegations that the married Republican lawmaker, who opposes abortion rights, asked his mistress to terminate a pregnancy.

Murphy admitted several weeks ago to an affair with forensic psychologist Shannon Edwards — news that came to light during the woman's divorce proceedings with her husband.

"After discussions with my family and staff, I have come to the decision that I will not seek reelection to Congress at the end of my current term," Murphy said in his statement. "I plan to spend my remaining months in office continuing my work as the national leader on mental health care reform, as well as issues affecting working families in southwestern Pennsylvania."

Murphy added: "In the coming weeks I will take personal time to seek help as my family and I continue to work through our personal difficulties and seek healing. I ask you to respect our privacy during this time."

Murphy met privately with Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) before his retirement announcement, as well as with Pennsylvania GOP Reps. Bill Shuster and Charlie Dent.

A number of top Republicans have said privately that Murphy should retire or resign in light of the scandal.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported Tuesday that Murphy suggested Edwards get an abortion during a pregnancy scare, citing leaked text messages between the two.

"And you have zero issue posting your pro-life stance all over the place when you had no issue asking me to abort our unborn child just last week when we thought that was one of the options," Edwards texted to Murphy in late January, according to the Post-Gazette.

Edwards was responding to a Facebook post by Murphy touting his anti-abortion position in Congress. Murphy is a member of the House Pro-Life Caucus and voted Tuesday for legislation

to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

The story also highlighted a toxic work environment in Murphy's office, citing a June 8 memo in which his chief of staff, Susan Mosychuk, warned Murphy about mistreating staff. The document, titled "Office Conduct and Behavior: Harassment/Legal Compliance," suggests there was a "pattern of sustained inappropriate behavior."

Mosychuk wrote that the office has experienced 100 percent staff turnover over the past several years and attributed it to the congressman's behavior. She said he often worked staff through the weekends, only to berate them for failing to meet expectations.

Murphy's district leans heavily Republican, backing Donald Trump by almost 20 points in 2016 and Mitt Romney by nearly 17 points in 2012. It is likely to remain in Republican hands.

Indeed, national Democrats scoffed at the idea that Democrats might be able to retake the seat — even if Murphy, crippled from scandal, were to run again. One Democratic consultant called it "completely unwinnable" as an open seat.

"[Murphy] is certainly weaker today than he was yesterday, but it'd be a stretch to say this is a Democratic pickup opportunity," another national Democratic strategist said.

The chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, Rep. Steve Stivers of Ohio, likewise said in a statement late Wednesday evening that he was "confident" the district would stay in GOP hands next year.

"While I am extremely disappointed in the circumstances surrounding Congressman Murphy's retirement, I remain confident that PA-18 will remain under Republican control next year," Stivers said. "I look forward to working with the eventual Republican nominee to ensure the district's conservative values are represented in Congress."

Still, Democrats on the ground are more hopeful, pointing to competitive down-ballot results in the district.

"It's a tough district, no doubt about it, but Democrats have been able to keep it close in other races," said Mike Mikus, a longtime Democratic operative in the state. "I think you'll see more Democrats taking a look at this and considering jumping in now."

A handful of Democrats are already in the race, including Pam Iovino, a Navy veteran and former Veterans Affairs official; Mike Crossey, a former member of the Allegheny County Council; and Bob Solomon, a physician.

But former Rep. Jason Altmire — a centrist Democrat who represented Western Pennsylvania and lost his seat, partially due to redistricting, in 2012 — said "it would have to be the right kind of Democrat" to put the seat in play.

"If you had a social conservative Democrat, it's been proven that a Democrat like that and who

fits that mold can win," Altmire said.

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MSHA nominee: 'I was not proud' of violations notice [Back](#)

By Ian Kullgren | 10/04/2017 05:55 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's nominee for assistant secretary of Labor for Mine Safety & Health told a Senate committee today that his coal company ignored safety conditions at one of its mines.

David Zatezalo was chairman of Rhino Resources when it received pattern of violation notices in 2010 and 2011, the Charleston Gazette-Mail previously reported. The company was later fined when a wall collapsed, killing a worker.

When questioned by Sen. [Tim Kaine](#) (D-Va.) about the notice, Zatezalo blamed the mine manager.

"The management of that particular group and that particular site was not doing what they should have been doing," Zatezalo said. "I was not proud of the fact that we got designated as a [potential pattern of violations] mine. I did not try to lawyer up and stop anything from happening."

"I replaced that management," he added, "because I wasn't too happy with their performance and hadn't been for sometime."

Zatezalo appeared before the Senate HELP Committee for a confirmation hearing with Cheryl Stanton and Peter Robb, Trump's nominees for Wage and Hour Division administrator and NLRB general counsel, respectively. Few senators showed up to the hearing, though, and [Patty Murray](#) (D-Wash.) complained that the Senate's busy schedule didn't leave enough time to probe as deeply as she would have liked.

Zatezalo assured Kaine that he wouldn't have a problem working with career staff at MSHA who issued the notice to his company.

"They did what they were supposed to do," he said.

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
05/19/2017 01:01 PM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Happy Friday afternoon and welcome to the real Power Briefing. Due to a production error, you may have gotten Playbook this morning with a Power Briefing subject line. Sorry. We're still here for you this afternoon, too.

THE TAGLINE FOR TRUMP'S TRIP TO ISRAEL -- "EVEN STRONGER" -- President Trump will spend two days in Israel, starting on Monday. **The logo** <http://bit.ly/2qBE5nP>

-- **THE MEDIA** on Trump's first international trip -- **ABC**: Jonathan Karl, Cecilia Vega and Karen Travers. **CBS**: Major Garrett and Margaret Brennan. **NYT**: Michael Shear for the entire trip, Peter Baker for the Middle East and Mark Landler for Europe. During the trip, Shear will text a limited number of new Times subscribers with personal dispatches, a look behind the curtain and answers to their questions. **POLITICO**: Annie Karni for the first leg and Tara Palmeri for the second. **WAPO**: Phil Rucker and Karen DeYoung.

-- **@realDonaldTrump** at 10:24 a.m.: "Getting ready for my big foreign trip. Will be strongly protecting American interests - that's what I like to do!"

-- **TRUMP** is scheduled to depart the White House for the first leg of his trip at 1:50 p.m. He is headed to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

MEANWHILE... -- "**Barack Obama arrives at luxury Tuscan estate for holiday as Trump embarks on grueling foreign tour,**" by The Telegraph's Nick Squires <http://bit.ly/2rzpnek>

SIREN -- THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE announced that they will release a cost estimate for the House-passed version of the AHCA on Wednesday, May 24.

THERE WILL BE NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT of a nominee for FBI director today, per our colleague Matt Nussbaum, today's pooler.

WHAT DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROD ROSENSTEIN SAID -- The key quote

from Rosenstein's remarks in closed door briefings to the Senate and House, per NBC's Pete Williams: "On May 8, I learned that President Trump intended to remove Director Comey and sought my advice and input. Notwithstanding my personal affection for Director Comey, I thought it was appropriate to seek a new leader ... I chose the issues to include in my memorandum ... I wrote it. I believe it. I stand by it." **Full memo**
<http://bit.ly/2qBAdDh>

-- **"Sessions and Rosenstein discussed firing Comey last winter,"** by Austin Wright
<http://politi.co/2qBy0aO>

MORE LIEBERMAN PILE ON -- Multiple Playbookers sent emails after this morning's editions making note of one slight in particular that Joe Lieberman did that it appears many Democrats haven't forgotten: endorsing Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) at the Republican National Convention. "His friendship and loyalty with McCain was understood and forgiven. His address from the RNC was not," one Democrat emailed. "Many Democrats have been waiting for their shot at Joe for awhile."

-- **"Lieberman pick for FBI would spell trouble for Julian Assange,"** by Josh Gerstein <http://politi.co/2qBhDLo>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** In just three years, JPMorgan Chase invested over \$100 million in Detroit's recovery, including community and small business development, workforce readiness and neighborhood revitalization to drive economic growth. Detroit is a case study for how the private sector can collaborate with government and community leaders to drive change. Learn more:
<http://politi.co/2pGuwQc> *****

HMM... -- **"Trump attorney didn't want him to sign financial disclosure,"** by the AP's Julie Bykowicz: "Donald Trump's attorneys originally wanted him to submit an updated financial disclosure without certifying the information as true, according to correspondence with the Office of Government Ethics."

"Attorney Sheri Dillon said she saw no need for Trump to sign his 2016 personal financial disclosure because he is filing voluntarily this year. But OGE director Walter Shaub said his office would only work with Dillon if she agreed to follow the typical process of having Trump make the certification. That is standard practice for the thousands of financial disclosure forms OGE processes each year. The Associated Press obtained the letters under a Freedom of Information Act request."
<http://apne.ws/2qBwzJz>

AP -- "The Latest: Anthony Weiner cries while apologizing in court": "Former U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner is crying in court as he apologizes to the 15-year-old girl with whom he exchanged sexually explicit texts. The judge accepted Weiner's guilty plea Friday to a charge of transmitting sexual material to a minor. He agreed to not appeal any sentence between 21 and 27 months in prison. The Democratic former congressman apologized to the 15-year-old, saying, 'I have a sickness, but I do not

have an excuse.'" <http://apne.ws/2qFp3LB>

VIDEO DU JOUR -- SEN. AL FRANKEN (D-Minn.) has a trailer for his new book "Al Franken, Giant of the Senate" that's worth the click, just for the chuckles.

<http://bit.ly/2q0KsOd>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- A big weekend for California Democrats -- Conservatives line up to prevent Warren win <http://politi.co/2rzGvkb>

PEEK BEHIND THE CURTAIN -- @PhilippeReines: "Not easy to avoid the unwanted Trump hug, sometimes it even takes practice... A favorite moment from debate prep (9/24/16)" <http://bit.ly/2qBva5O>

MEDIAWATCH -- JAMES STEWART in the NYT, "Washington Post, Breaking News, Is Also Breaking New Ground": "Scoops -- and high-quality journalism more generally -- are integral to The Post's business model at a time when the future of digital journalism seemed to be veering toward the lowest common denominator of exploding watermelons and stupid pet tricks.

"Investigative reporting is absolutely critical to our business model,' [Post executive editor Marty] Baron told me. 'We add value. We tell people what they didn't already know. We hold government and powerful people and institutions accountable. This cannot happen without financial support. We're at the point where the public realizes that and is willing to step up and support that work by buying subscriptions.'"

<http://nyti.ms/2qBGJtP>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- The Congressional Women's Softball Game has announced its rosters for its ninth annual game on June 21. The CWSG has raised more than \$200,000 for the Young Survivors Coalition, a record for this early in the season. Rookies on the lawmakers team include: Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) and Reps. Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-Calif.), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.), Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.), Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.), and Norma Torres (D-Calif.). For the Press team, rookies include ABC News' Mary Bruce, Real Clear Politics' Emily Goodin, PBS NewsHour's Erica Hendry and Pamela Kirkland, CNN's Leigh Munsil, New York Times' Alicia Parlapiano, and Huffington Post's Kate Sheppard. ***The full roster***

<http://bit.ly/2rm9yLx>

PLAYBOOK INBOX -- Someone in House Majority Whip Steve Scalise's office is a fan of 2011 viral videos, because today's floor updated opened with the line "Good morning. In the angelic voice of Rebecca Black - 'It's Friday, Friday!'"

TRANSITIONS -- Devin M. O'Malley is now at the Justice Department's Office of Public Affairs. He previously worked at i360.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) and **Brittany Swalwell**, director of sales at the Ritz-Carlton resort in Half Moon Bay, California, late last night

welcomed their first son, Nelson Swalwell. Nelson debuted in San Ramon, California, at a healthy 7 lbs 15 oz. Family and baby are happy and doing well. **Instapic**
<http://bit.ly/2q3Urlq>

OUT AND ABOUT -- The Washington Ireland Program for Service and Leadership held its eighth annual An "Evening with Celtic Chefs", at the St. Regis Hotel last night. **SPOTTED:** Reps. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.), Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.), Tim Murphy (R-Pa.), Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Brendan Boyle (D-Pa.), Donald Payne Jr. (D-N.J.), Tom Emmer (D-Minn.) and Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.), Ambassadors Anne Anderson, Elizabeth Frawley Bagley and Paula Dobriansky, Northern Ireland Bureau Director Norman Houston, Stephanie Cutter, Jen O'Malley Dillon, Jake Sullivan, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and making an appearance all the way from Ireland, WIP Executive Director Bryan Patten.

-- **Nelson Mullins** held its annual rooftop reception last night and 600 people attended, they said. **SPOTTED:** Sens. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Reps. Richie Neal (D-Mass.), Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.), Tom Rice (R-S.C.), Bill Keating (D-Mass.), Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.), Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) and Mike Doyle (D-Pa.), Jack Cline of the University of Kansas, Aaron Lowe of Auto Care Association, Bill Cunningham and Ashley Patterson of Ameresco, Emily Heisig of the New England Council, Jim Gordon of TransCanada, Dr. Sharon Robinson of AACTE, Michele McLaughlin of Knowledge Alliance, Bill Gardepe of WMG and Associates, Carmel Martin of the Center for American Progress, Vincent Storimans of the Netherlands Embassy, and Sheryl Shuman of the Singapore Embassy.

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Research shows that thriving neighborhoods are key to any city's long-term economic success. See how JPMorgan Chase's investments have helped create or preserve 700 mixed-use housing units, provided financing and counseling to homeowners and enabled the mapping of 380,000 properties in Detroit: <http://politi.co/2r1QqSY> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Fri 6/9/2017 2:04:52 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: Pruitt's approach to EPA panned by former chiefs — Zinke nears decision on Bears Ears — Carper floats separating consideration of NRC picks

By Anthony Adragna | 06/09/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Sara Stefanini and Alex Guillén

WANT THAT OLD THING BACK? EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has pressed the idea of taking the agency "back to basics," returning to its roots of cleaning up toxic waste sites under the Superfund program and providing safe drinking water, while rejecting the Obama administration's initiatives on issues like climate change. But as Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#), previous EPA administrators from both parties say the agency's mission is far broader than the cramped version Pruitt's promoting. "I don't think it has to be an either-or, nor should it be," said Christine Todd Whitman, George W. Bush's first EPA administrator. "Superfund is not the only issue for human health. Water pollution is a huge issue and very important and you need to work on it, but it's not the only issue. Air is an issue too. Even if you don't want to believe in climate change, you've got to believe that carbon and mercury are not good for you."

It's not just old administrators though. Thomas Jorling, who co-authored the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972 as a Senate Republican staffer, said that Pruitt's philosophy of "EPA originalism" is wrong. Continuing to stick to a limited set of cherry-picked priorities Pruitt has chosen to champion is "just disingenuous," he added. "It's all basically a smokescreen to their real intention, which is kind of a moral and ethical corruption, to ... restore the dependence of the United States energy system on fossil fuels." The agency did not make Pruitt available for an interview.

ME EXTRA - HISTORY LESSON: Lee Thomas, Reagan's second-term EPA administrator, said Pruitt's budget-slashing, anti-regulatory agenda has certain parallels to one of his predecessors: Anne Gorsuch Burford, Reagan's first EPA chief and the mother of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. Burford, who died in 2004, had no previous relationship with agency staff, reduced EPA's budget by 22 percent and once boasted about cutting a book of water regulations from six inches thick to just half an inch. She ultimately resigned in 1983 after being cited for contempt of Congress in a management scandal regarding Superfund, at that time a new program. More than a dozen other agency officials quit in the surrounding months amid a turbulent atmosphere at the agency.

Thomas, at that time deputy director at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, came on as a top official to help right EPA, and two years later returned as administrator after Bill Ruckelshaus had stabilized the agency. "I've seen it go bad. And I've seen what it takes to go back on track," Thomas said. "The public does not want EPA to go through that kind of crisis."

G-7'S (TOTALLY AWKWARD) ENVIRONMENT MEETING: G-7 environment ministers meet in Bologna on Sunday and Monday, just 10 days after Trump announced he was ditching the Paris climate agreement (unless the rest of the world agrees to better terms, of course). Pruitt

will be there as the American representative. The biggest battle to watch for: Will the other six ministers and Pruitt come to any agreement on a communiqué that supports efforts to tackle climate change? (ME bets no.) Disagreements over climate already scuppered a joint statement at the G-7 energy ministers meeting, and Trump refused to back commitments made at the leaders summit last month.

Benvenuti! Pruitt tweeted a picture Thursday from Italy after "mtg w/ U.S. companies doing business in Europe." The agency told ME representatives from Whirlpool, DuPont, Chemours, First Solar and 3M attended, as well as a few Italian companies, but declined to provide any further details on Pruitt's schedule while in Europe.

TGIF MY FRIENDS! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Hunton & Williams' Joe Stanko was first to identify Sen. Lamar Alexander as the former Cabinet member (Education Secretary under President George H.W. Bush) now in the Senate. Your end-of-the-week fun: The spouse of which U.S. senator co-owns the legendary Strand Bookstore? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aaadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

ROUND, ROUND, GET AROUND: He's apparently still in discussions with the White House ahead of a final recommendation about whether to rescind or tweak the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, but Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is planning to keep chugging on his national tour. Zinke plans to visit Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts during a four-day swing kicking off June 13. That trip will include a tour of the hotly contested Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, another of the more than two dozen monument designations under the Antiquities Act currently under review by the Trump administration.

TRUMP HAILS NEW COAL MINE'S OPENING: Trump hailed the opening Thursday of Corsa Coal Corp. in Pennsylvania, a new mine digging coal used to make steel, as proof deregulation is helping bring jobs to the industry, ABC News reports. "We have withdrawn the United States from the horrendous Paris climate accord, something that would have put our country back decades and decades, we would have never allowed ourselves to be great again," the president said in a video message. About 200 miners, business leaders, and politicians celebrated its opening under a tent amid mining headgear labeled "Make Coal Great Again."

RIDIN' SOLO? Sen. Tom Carper, the top EPW Democrat, has asked Republicans to split off the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki to the NRC from other two Republican nominees in order to fast track the process, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. "One of the things I've suggested to Chairman [John] Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

FOR YOUR WEEKEND RADAR: Activists will gather Saturday at city halls and statehouses across the country to protest Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord. "Our communities cannot and will not allow these reckless policies and decisions to wreck our

future," organizers, who include 350.org, the Sierra Club, The Climate Reality Project and many more, said in a statement.

Now here's a far away hearing: Senate Energy and Natural Resources plans to hold a field hearing at 10 a.m. local time Saturday in Cordova, Alaska - accessible only by boat or plane (book you tickets for Mudhole Smith Airport). Representatives from Sandia National Laboratory, Alaska Center for Energy and Power, Alaska Village Electric Cooperative and Alaskan Brewing Company will be examining microgrids and hybrid energy systems. Both Lisa Murkowski and Maria Cantwell, the top Republican and Democrat on the committee, are slated to participate.

WHITEHOUSE: CCS CREDITS BILL READY TO FOR REPRIS: A bill to expand tax credits for carbon capture projects should be ready for introduction soon, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse told ME. "It's close enough that we're having conversations about when and final steps," he said. The bill, which will be co-sponsored with Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, would attempt to revive is one a trio of "orphaned" tax credits, along with credits for geothermal and for advanced nuclear plants - that were left out of the 2015 omnibus bill that extended solar and wind tax incentives.

Warns 'raiding party' has hit EPA: Republican "heads would be exploding" if a Democratic administration simply ignored requests for information as Pruitt's EPA has done to Democrats, Whitehouse told ME. "Basically, the fossil fuel industry has sent a raiding party into EPA and taken it over," the Rhode Island Democrat said. "I think he feels a kind of immunity from any kind of accountability because the fossil fuel industry so owns the Republican Party and so owns him."

JUDGE, IRKED BY DOJ, LETS KIDS CLIMATE CASE GO TO TRIAL: A federal judge on Thursday slammed the Justice Department for trying to force her hand on a legal matter in the lawsuit brought by children seeking to compel sweeping federal action on greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump administration had asked Judge Ann Aiken of the U.S. District Court in Oregon to let them appeal her decision not to dismiss the lawsuit before moving into the discovery phase. In a short order, Aiken criticized DOJ for threatening to go to the 9th Circuit anyway by today if she hadn't already ruled on the request, noting that the suit is already on an expedited schedule. She said the government's arguments were too weak to secure even faster consideration, and panned DOJ because it asked for a rapid decision after waiting four months to make its initial request. Aiken also gave the green light to move closer to the trial phase. The Trump administration could still try to get the 9th Circuit involved, but the appellate court is unlikely to intervene in an ongoing case.

BIPARTISAN BILL PASSES SENATE: Senators passed Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act (S. 826) by voice vote Thursday. The legislation, co-sponsored by Chairman John Barrasso and Carper, would reauthorize funding for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in which the Interior partnerships with private landowners in fighting invasive species and offer rewards for innovative technologies to stop invasive species. The bill cleared committee in April.

TROLL SO HARD: French President Emmanuel Macron poked Trump again Thursday by

launching a website urging anyone concerned with climate change to move to France, POLITICO Europe's Nicholas Vinocur [reports](#). The website - www.MakeOurPlanetGreatAgain.fr - plays on Trump's campaign slogan and invites researchers, entrepreneurs and NGO workers from around the world to state their interest in climate change and their specialist field, then apply for positions and immigration documents to come to France.

ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE: Did everyone remember it's the White House's Infrastructure Week? Well, Vice President Mike Pence certainly did, and told a working luncheon Thursday that Trump intended to speed up the approval of new projects. "We'll revolutionize federal permitting and review with the goal of reducing wait times from 10 years to two years," he said.

ENERGY PRIORITIES OUTLINED FOR NAFTA: A bipartisan group of eight senators has outlined specific "principles" that the Trump administration should consider when it renegotiates NAFTA, Pro Trade's Adam Behsudi [reports](#). "NAFTA has played a key role in all North American energy markets including electricity, renewable, oil, and natural gas, as each market is highly integrated with and remains dependent on vital energy infrastructure and trade crossings that border the United States, Canada, and Mexico," they wrote in a [letter](#) organized by Sen. [John Cornyn](#).

EPA UNION DEMANDS GUVS FIGHT FOR GREAT LAKES: The union representing some 1,000 EPA employees has asked to meet with six Midwest governors - Mark Dayton of Minnesota, Eric Holcomb of Indiana, John Kasich of Ohio, Bruce Rauner of Illinois, Rick Snyder of Michigan and Scott Walker of Wisconsin - to strongly oppose proposed budget cuts to the agency that they warn would severely impact the Great Lakes. "Aside from the long term health and safety of the public in the Great Lakes region, the economic threats to the region must be recognized," Michael Mikulka, president of Local 704 of the American Federation of Government Employees, said in a statement.

THEY'RE FIRED UP: Green groups are burning up over the Forest Service's [proposal](#) this week to expand two coal leases inside Colorado national forests. Local and national green groups are bristling at the plan to bulldoze wilderness for several new miles of roads and build new drilling pads for methane vents in an area home to black bears, elk and lynx. "Giving away our western public lands to the coal industry isn't energy independence, it's a scheme to make executives and shareholders rich at our expense," said Shannon Hughes of WildEarth Guardians. A 45-day public comment period ends July 24; if approved, the next step is a second approval from the Bureau of Land Management.

SOMETHING SYMBOLIC HERE: California Gov. Jerry Brown and Energy Secretary (and former Texas governor) Rick Perry shaking hands while going opposite directions on an escalator during a trip to China. [Pic](#).

REPORT: EPA DIDN'T UPDATE POLICIES AS REQUIRED: The GAO released a report Thursday finding EPA failed to update the agency's policy statement for the Science Advisory Board as required under a congressional spending bill, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). "EPA did not update its policies or requirements for the SAB as directed by the explanatory statement," it said.

REPORT: CLEAN ENERGY'S DIRTY SECRET: America Rising Squared is out with a [new white paper](#) arguing there are "great human and environmental costs" behind the production of clean energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles and EV batteries. "The inconvenient truth is that these 'clean' sources of energy are produced under the worst of labor and environmental rights violations," it says.

DEMOCRATIC REPORT: ENERGY EFFICIENCY EFFICIENTLY CREATES JOBS: Democrats on the Joint Economic Committee, a congressional economic advisory committee formed in 1946, are out with a [report](#) today arguing for the job-creating capacity of energy efficiency measures. The report notes that EE jobs bounced up to 2.2 million in 2016, 7 percent increase from the previous year. The report calls on Congress to fully fund the Energy Star program, scheduled to be eliminated under Trump's budget, and in additional research.

AD WATCH: 15 PERCENT ETHANOL ALERT: Growth energy is launching a seven-figure [TV](#) and digital ad buy in D.C. and other markets to promote Sen. [Deb Fischer](#)'s bill to allow year-round sale of 15 percent ethanol fuel. The bill is set to get a hearing at EPW next week.

MOVER, SHAKER! Former House Speaker John Boehner has joined Arizona Mining Inc.'s board of directors (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

- Digging the Graveyard of Oil's Past. [New York Times](#).
- Merkel in Argentina talks Trump, trade and climate change. [AP](#).
- Canada invites Chinese investment in oil sands: minister. [Reuters](#).
- As Oil Plumbs New Depths, Someone Sees \$80 a Barrel by December. [Bloomberg](#).
- As Trump's EPA delays smog rules, California vows to forge ahead. [Los Angeles Times](#).
- Qatar Gulf row roils LNG market, Shell tanker diverted. [Reuters](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/09/pruitts-approach-to-epa-panned-by-former-chiefs-220760>

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To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Sat 11/11/2017 4:39:18 PM
Subject: Fwd: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Can you send him some generic statement?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com>
Date: November 10, 2017 at 11:36:36 AM GMT-7
To: "Wilcox, Jahan" <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: "Abboud, Michael" <abboud.michael@epa.gov>, "Bowman, Liz" <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>, "Hewitt, James" <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Are you guys still able to get me these numbers? Thanks.

On Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 3:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We will get a number tomorrow for you.

On Nov 2, 2017, at 6:19 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

I am not trying to be a pest, but can someone please answer my inquiries?

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 5:42 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan
<alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan
<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s

senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.'

([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office."

([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
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Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com

[mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM

To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

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Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
Cc: Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 2:01:26 PM
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL//EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

Good thanks

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 9:00 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Cc: Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL//EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

EPA News Highlights 12.19.17

The Weekly Standard: There's No Scandal at the EPA

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich. Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

Chicago Tribune: EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood. The EPA on Monday

announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site. The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump. "E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.) Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt. But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump

Bloomberg: Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp. The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals. "It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Reuters: EPA seeks comment on carbon rule replacement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday issued a notice that it wants public input for a possible replacement of Obama-era regulations on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants that the agency is repealing. The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release. The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse

gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. “The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches,” the notice says.

The Hill: EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices. The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a “sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices” in Administrator Scott Pruitt’s office at the agency’s Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show. The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt’s arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs. Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head. He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

National News Highlights 12.19.17

Reuters: US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump. The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote. The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said. With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain. Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The Washington Post: Trump team’s meeting with Mueller’s office poised to ratchet up tensions

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared. But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump. People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials.

The Wall Street Journal: Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation. That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law. The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less. The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Weekly Standard

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

“Another entry from the authoritarian handbook,” says David Axelrod. MSNBC’s Chris Hayes thinks it’s a “hunt” for “ideological subversives.” The public is financing “lies” to “eviscerate environmental protections,” according to Robert Reich.

Liberals accuse their adversaries of fascism pretty regularly these days, so you likely have no idea what is worrying these lefty grandees. To be specific: Over the weekend the New York Times published a story about the Environmental Protection Agency hiring a public relations firm to investigate “agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration.” A vice president of the firm, Definers Public Affairs, explains it to the Times straightforwardly: they were asked to look into whether EPA employees “were emailing critical things about the agency on government time and how frequently they were corresponding about this.”

In order to discover if employees were engaging in “resistance” activities on the clock, Definers submitted Freedom of Information requests to the agency about the employees. In other words, rather than simply fire or demote employees who undermine the agency’s leadership, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt’s team sought to document the times when these activities took place while the employees were at work.

There is no scandal here. The lawfully appointed head of an agency has every right to find out if employees are actively undercutting his mission and getting paid to do so. Pruitt is loathed by the environmental militants inside the EPA (to understand why, read Fred Barnes’s feature story in the December 25 WEEKLY STANDARD). The use of FOIA requests is an open and lawful way to deal with those who aren’t simply voicing legitimate policy differences but actually impairing the agency’s director. Definers only used public information to file its requests, not internal documents (an important point ignored by the Times in both the original story and a follow-up). That Pruitt’s team dealt with the problem of internal opposition not by secret purges but by use of open-records requests shows a reverence for transparency and the rule of law. If an “authoritarian” regime wanted to “hunt down ideological subversives,” it wouldn’t use FOIA requests. It would just fire them.

The Times is viscerally hostile to Pruitt, and it is hardly surprising that one of its reporters would find a scandal where there is nothing of the sort. Surely a reporter who claims in his Twitter bio that “transparency matters a lot to me” might have stopped to consider this obvious point. But for our paper of record, too often “transparency” only matters when it yields the right kind of political results.

The Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-east-chicago-epa-orders-st-1219-20171218-story.html>

EPA orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup

By Craig Lyons, 12/18/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered companies blamed for contamination in East Chicago to take over the cleanup of part of the Calumet neighborhood.

The EPA on Monday announced it filed two unilateral administrative orders against six companies held responsible for the contamination in East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood, which is a part of the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site.

The orders would compel the companies – U.S.S. Lead, Atlantic Richfield Co., DuPont, Chemours, United States Metals Refining Co. and Mueller Industries – to remediate contaminated soil in Zone 2, which runs from McCook to Huish Drive, and do indoor dust cleaning in that area and Zone 3, which runs east of Huish. The EPA said its staff will oversee the contractors the companies hire to do the work.

"We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement.

The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.

The new agreements come almost a week after the EPA said the costs to remove contaminated soil from two neighborhoods on the Superfund site could quadruple from what was initially estimated.

The EPA said the cost anticipated for the two residential zones of the Calumet neighborhood are

expected to increase from the estimated \$22.8 million to an estimated \$84.9 million.

The EPA said it based the initial cost estimate on sampling done at 7 percent of the homes in those two residential areas, according to documents, but now that testing has been done at 90 percent of the properties, the data showed more the remediate would require more resources.

The EPA's remediation plan for zones 2 and 3 includes excavation of contaminated soil to a maximum depth of 24 inches; disposal of the contaminated material; and restoring the yards once new soil is filled in, according to EPA documents.

The U.S.S. Lead Superfund site is one of 21 that Pruitt put on a list of sites in need of immediate and intense attention. Pruitt visited East Chicago in April and it was the first Superfund site he had went to after taking office.

Pruitt last week put the U.S.S. Lead Superfund site on a list of 21 sites across the county in need of immediate and intense attention, according to a press release.

"Getting toxic land sites cleaned up and revitalized is of the utmost importance to the communities across the country that are affected by these sites," Pruitt said, in a statement. "I have charged the Superfund Task Force to immediately and intently develop plans for each of these sites to ensure they are thoughtfully addressed with urgency."

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/blog/epa-bureaucrats-complain-pruitt-doesnt-want-conspire-trump/>

EPA Bureaucrats Complain Pruitt Doesn't Want Them to Conspire Against Trump

By Elizabeth Harrington, 12/19/17

EPA bureaucrats are running to the New York Times to complain that Administrator Scott Pruitt doesn't want them conspiring against him or President Donald Trump.

"E.P.A. Employees Spoke Out. Then Came Scrutiny of Their Email," the Times writes breathlessly, implying that Pruitt himself is scouring over their emails. (He's not.)

Readers have to get to the 17th paragraph to realize that the "scrutiny of their email" was from a Republican lawyer outside the agency who filed Freedom of Information Act requests after the bureaucrats had very publicly blasted Trump and Pruitt.

But for the Times, it's a "witch hunt" against career bureaucrats, and three star-crossed employees bold enough to speak out against Trump:

One Environmental Protection Agency employee spoke up at a private lunch held near the agency headquarters, saying she feared the nation might be headed toward an 'environmental catastrophe.' Another staff member, from Seattle, sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, raising similar concerns about the direction of the agency. A third, from Philadelphia, went to a rally where he protested against agency budget cuts.

Three different agency employees, in different jobs, from three different cities, but each encountered a similar outcome: Federal records show that within a matter of days, requests were submitted for copies of emails written by them that mentioned either Mr. Pruitt or President Trump, or any communication with Democrats in Congress that might have been critical of the agency.

Another take: people notice when employees publicly criticize their boss. And if it's in politics, Republican operatives might want to know if employees are actively working to sabotage a Republican administration.

The Times doesn't mention that the bureaucrats—Elizabeth Southerland, Michael Cox, and Gary Morton—all either leaked to liberal news outlets to criticize Pruitt and Trump, or attended "resistance" rallies.

Allan Blutstein, the lawyer who is vice president of FOIA Operations at the Republican group America Rising, told the Times that he submitted the requests for "employees who had made public statements critical of Mr. Pruitt."

"He said he wanted to know if any of them had used agency email inappropriately, or had violated agency rules in some other way — findings that he could use to compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work," the Times wrote.

"Compromise efforts to undermine Mr. Pruitt's work." Read another way: Republicans want to see if these career bureaucrats who hate Pruitt are working to sabotage the administration.

I wonder why Republicans would worry about that?

"Washington Bureaucrats Are Quietly Working to Undermine Trump's Agenda," Bloomberg reported Monday, just a day after the Times defense of the three resistance bureaucrats at the EPA.

Bloomberg writes, "Some of the roughly two million career staff have found ways to obstruct, slow down, or simply ignore their new leader, the president."

The article even prints one career bureaucrat's "checklist" for resistance. Joel Clement, a former bureaucrat in the Department of Interior, says others should start "leaking documents," and "slowing down the implementation of the policy," after first trying a "legitimate approach before you obstruct," of course.

The Times says now bureaucrats are living under a "wave of fear," and that they could get in trouble for tweeting "critical comments" against EPA management. (Maybe don't bad mouth your boss on social media.)

But the employees the Times highlighted don't have much to worry about.

Southerland and Cox took early retirement. Both went to a liberal Washington Post columnist Joe Davidson to publicize their dissatisfaction when they were on their way out the door.

Cox leaked his anti-Trump letter in April, which the Post ran under the headline, "EPA staffer leaves with a bang, blasting agency policies under Trump."

In his letter, Cox said he was "frankly insulted" that President Trump would visit the EPA, and that Trump did so to "give us the finger." He called the Trump administration "arrogant and callous," and accused Pruitt of having "not done your homework" on the Paris climate deal."

"Fortunately," Cox wrote, "there are other global leaders, including China and India, who understand the urgency of the problem and are taking action."

Blutstein filed a FOIA request on Cox a few days after Cox went to the Washington Post.

In August, Southerland leaked her complaints against the Trump administration to the Post, claiming she was retiring in protest. She claimed EPA wouldn't be able to do the "right thing" under Trump. A FOIA request was filed the next day.

It turns out Southerland was not retiring in protest of Trump, but said in emails that she "needed to retire to help out with family medical care."

As for Morton, he's the head of an EPA government union who has said, "The EPA as we know it might not exist any more" because of Trump.

"His emails were targeted seven days after he participated in a union rally in March challenging proposed budget cuts," the Times reported.

The Times fails to mention it was a "resistance" rally, organized by Morton's union the American Federation of Government Employees.

"This is a witch hunt against E.P.A. employees who are only trying to protect human health and the environment," Morton now says.

I'd call it a "resistance hunt." And it's not that difficult when you do it out in the open.

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-18/pruitt-s-epa-turns-to-lean-manufacturing-to-speed-up-reviews>

Pruitt's EPA Turns to 'Lean Manufacturing' to Speed Up Reviews

By Eric Rosen and John Lippert, 12/18/17

President Donald Trump's bid to speed up regulatory approvals is relying on a "lean manufacturing" approach inspired by Toyota Motor Corp.

The Environmental Protection Agency's chief of operations has a long history of implementing Toyota's concept, which focuses on labor-management dialogue to curb defects and cut delays. The agency is in discussions about entering into a contract with Toyota's management spinoff to help it accomplish its goals.

"It's not about policy. It's not about specific decisions," Henry Darwin, the EPA operations chief, said in an interview. It's "about the process that we use in order to basically eliminate waste and maximize customer value."

Before joining the EPA, Darwin had a 20-year career in Arizona where he served as director of the Department of Environmental Quality and then as chief of operations. He led development of the state's management strategy for Governor Doug Ducey before leaving at the end of June.

Still, overhauling how the agency works may face difficulties at the EPA where many members of the 15,000 workforce have bristled under the leadership of Trump and Administrator Scott Pruitt. This year EPA ranked 22nd out of 23 mid-size federal agencies in how its employees rate the effectiveness of its senior leaders, according to a survey by the Partnership for Public Service.

EPA is a sprawling organization, offering everything from advice on eradicating bedbugs to state-by-state data showing the first frost of autumn comes later than it ever has historically. Pruitt, who sued the agency a number of times while attorney general of Oklahoma, came into the agency pledging to scale-back its reach, leave more rulemaking and enforcement to states and get "back to basics." Critics, including Democrats in Congress, have said he's too cozy with the industries he's supposed to regulate and wondered about the need for a \$25,000 soundproof "privacy booth."

Pruitt dropped Darwin's name this month at a congressional oversight hearing when explaining that the agency is "actually partnering with Toyota to begin a 'lean' process at the agency to evaluate management practices."

"The agency for many years — and this is something I found surprising — has not measured outcomes consistently," he added.

Toyota introduced lean manufacturing into the U.S. in the 1980s when it began building factories outside Japan for the first time. For a quarter century, Toyota has also had a non-profit affiliate, called the Toyota Production System Support Center, that consults with Toyota suppliers and outside manufacturers, and provides advice to organizations, such as hospitals, food banks and governments.

The EPA and several other agencies are in talks with the TSSC about a contract on how they could redesign the way they conduct environmental reviews and permit "high-priority" infrastructure projects -- pipelines, ports, bridges and the electricity grid.

Pruitt's name check of Toyota raised some initial concerns that EPA was partnering with a company that it also regulated. Since the contract under discussion would be with a non-profit affiliate, the risks aren't as great, said George Wyeth, a career EPA attorney who retired this year.

"There is a potential ethics issue here, but not a big one," Wyeth said in an interview.

Still, longtime staff members are skeptical. It's not the first time the agency has tapped a management trend, according to John O'Grady, a 31-year EPA veteran who spoke in his capacity as president of Council 238 of the American Federation of Government Employees.

"I've been through too many flavors-of-the-month, of-the-year, whatever it is. They do it intensely for a while -- and then it just goes away," he said. "I'm very skeptical."

O'Grady said he's concerned that, because the agency hasn't conducted a true workforce analysis in 20 years, any decisions about the organization won't have sufficient data. And that could lead to staff cuts when more staff may be necessary to work on the EPA's growing portfolio, he said.

Darwin said that "lean" is in some ways a misnomer, and the goal of the process at EPA isn't to cut staff.

"It's not about creating the ability to reduce the size of an organization," Darwin said. "What it can do is allow it to become more effective and more efficient so that if we do create a capacity to do more with less."

Reuters

http://www.weeklystandard.com/editorial-theres-no-scandal-at-the-epa/article/2010883?custom_click=rss?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=TWSAutoTweet

There's No Scandal at the EPA

By Editors, 12/18/17

The agency's advance notice kicks off a 60-day comment period on "specific topics for the Agency to consider in developing any subsequent proposed rule," according to an EPA release.

The move comes after the agency proposed in October to repeal the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, a collection of emissions standards for U.S. states intended to reduce pollution from power plants - the largest emitters of greenhouse gases - by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"The EPA sets out and requests comment on the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the federal government, state governments, and regulated entities in developing and implementing such a rule, and the EPA solicits information regarding the appropriate scope of such a rule and associated technologies and approaches," the notice says.

When EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt first announced he planned to repeal the Clean Power Plan, it was not clear whether the agency intended to replace it. At his first congressional hearing earlier this month, Pruitt said he planned to replace it.

The notice specifically asks for comment on measures to reduce carbon emissions directly at a power plant.

Obama's Clean Power Plan allowed states to reduce power plant emissions by using a series of different measures across their plant fleets, which some industry groups said went beyond the scope of the federal Clean Air Act.

The EPA is also asking for comment on the role and responsibility of states in regulating power plants for greenhouse gas emissions.

The notice said EPA also wants to hear from states including California and New York, which already have programs to reduce emissions from power plants, to see how their programs could interact with a replacement rule.

Environmental groups, who plan to continue challenging the agency's moves against the CPP in court, said on Monday the agency is not serious about offering a valid replacement to the Obama-era regulation.

"A weaker replacement of the Clean Power Plan is a non-starter. Americans - who depend on EPA to protect their health and climate - deserve real solutions, not scams," said David Doniger, director of climate and clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/365495-epa-chief-pruitt-had-office-swept-for-surveillance-bugs#.Wjg7sWMetRY.twitter>

EPA chief Pruitt had office swept for surveillance bugs

By Tim Cama, 12/18/17

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had his office professionally examined earlier this year to look for covert surveillance devices.

The EPA paid \$3,000 in March to Edwin Steinmetz Associates to do a "sweep for covert/illegal surveillance devices" in Administrator Scott Pruitt's office at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters, documents provided to The Hill show.

The EPA source that provided the documents on the condition of anonymity said the sweep, which came weeks after Pruitt's arrival at the agency, did not uncover any bugs.

Pruitt has taken a number of steps to guard his security and privacy in his time as EPA head.

He is the first EPA administrator to have a 24-hour security detail, encompassing a staff of dozens of agents at a six-figure annual cost, often pulling agents away from environmental enforcement matters. He paid nearly \$25,000 for a secure phone booth in his office, despite an existing secure compartmentalized information facility (SCIF) elsewhere in the building.

Pruitt's staff has declined to release his schedule in advance over security concerns, and the New York Times reported that he asks some employees to leave their phones behind when meeting with him.

Like other security measures, the EPA defended the surveillance sweep as a response to unprecedented threats against Pruitt, whose aggressive deregulatory agenda has angered environmentalists and many others.

"Administrator Pruitt has received an unprecedented amount of threats against him and security decisions are made by EPA's Protective Service Detail," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said.

Lisa Jackson, who was EPA administrator from 2009 to 2013 under former President Barack Obama, also had a similar security sweep undertaken in the office, Wilcox said. Apple Inc., where Jackson oversees environmental initiatives, did not respond to a request for comment.

The Washington Post reported in September that the EPA had seen more threats against Pruitt than any previous administrator.

Doug Parker, who worked at the EPA for 25 years, mostly as a special agent in the criminal investigation division, said a bug sweep of the administrator's office is unusual.

“It doesn’t strike me as completely out of left field, but it’s certainly not routine, even in the administrator’s office,” said Parker, who retired in 2016 and now leads Earth & Water Strategies, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm.

“There could be valid concerns,” Parker said, pointing to national security-related conversations and foreign delegations that sometimes come to the EPA building.

“But it is certainly not something that was a routine occurrence in past administrator’s offices.”

Reuters

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/19/us-congress-poised-to-approve-biggest-tax-overhaul-in-30-years.html>

US Congress poised to approve biggest tax overhaul in 30 years

By Staff, 12/19/17

The Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will begin voting on Tuesday on the biggest overhaul of the U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, with little standing in the way of the party's first major legislative triumph under President Donald Trump.

The House of Representatives, which introduced initial tax legislation barely six weeks ago on Nov. 2, was poised to act first with a Tuesday afternoon vote.

The Senate could follow on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, after completing 10 hours of debate, lawmakers said.

With strict party-line votes expected in both chambers, passage appeared all but certain.

Republicans insist that the sweeping package of tax cuts for corporations, small businesses and individuals will boost economic and job growth. They also see the measure as key to having any hope of retaining their majorities in the House and Senate when voters go to the polls next November.

The end-of-year sprint toward passage represents a remarkable recovery of Republican fortunes since the middle of this year, when the party's drive to dismantle former Democratic President Barack Obama's Obamacare healthcare law crumbled in the Senate and prospects for a tax overhaul seemed doomed by party infighting.

Lingering doubts about fate of the tax bill all but vanished on Monday after two of the last Senate Republican holdouts, Susan Collins and Mike Lee, agreed to support the legislation.

"I'm ready to vote," Republican Senator John Kennedy told Reuters. "I felt like we should have voted this weekend."

'New Gilded Age'

Democrats, who unanimously oppose the Republican bill, railed against it as a giveaway to corporations and the wealthy that would add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade and deepen the U.S. income gap between rich and poor.

"There are so many rip-offs in this bill that people are going to say this is some kind of new Gilded Age," said Senator Ron Wyden, top Democrat on the Senate Tax Committee.

The House, where Republicans hold a 239-193 voting majority, was likely to see a smattering of "no" votes from Republican fiscal hawks and lawmakers from the high-tax states of New York, New Jersey and California who oppose a provision that would scale back a popular deduction for state and local taxes.

"It's still a bill that's going to give tax relief to other parts of America on the backs of New Yorkers. So I'm still going to vote 'no,'" said Republican Representative Dan Donovan of New York.

The legislation would also repeal a federal fine imposed on Americans under Obamacare for not obtaining health insurance coverage, a change that could undermine the 2010 healthcare law formally known as the Affordable Care Act.

Vice President Mike Pence took the precaution of rescheduling a trip to Egypt and Israel for January to be on hand this week, just in case his tie-breaking voting power is needed to ensure Senate passage of the tax bill.

Republicans, who control the 100-seat Senate by only a 52-48 margin, can afford to lose support from no more than two party lawmakers. Republican Senator Jeff Flake was still undecided late on Monday. Senator John McCain, who has brain cancer, was spending time with family in Arizona.

The Washington Post

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-teams-meeting-with-muellers-office-poised-to-ratchet-up-tensions/2017/12/18/15dac668-e41d-11e7-a65d-1ac0fd7f097e_story.html?utm_term=.6bed5005d264

Trump team's meeting with Mueller's office poised to ratchet up tensions

By Devlin Barrett, Josh Dawsey, and Carol Leonnig, 12/19/17

White House lawyers are expected to meet with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's office late this week seeking good news: that his sprawling investigation's focus on President Trump will soon end and their client will be cleared.

But people familiar with the probe say that such assurances are unlikely and that the meeting could trigger a new, more contentious phase between the special counsel and a frustrated president, according to administration officials and advisers close to Trump.

People with knowledge of the investigation said it could last at least another year — pointing to ongoing cooperation from witnesses such as former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, as well as a possible trial of two former Trump campaign officials. The special counsel's office has continued to request new documents related to the campaign, and members of Mueller's team have told others they expect to be working through much of 2018, at a minimum.

The dynamic threatens to intensify the already inflamed political atmosphere enveloping the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Even as White House lawyers have pledged to cooperate with Mueller, Trump and his allies have accused the Justice Department and FBI of bias and overreach.

The latest salvo came this past weekend, when a lawyer for the presidential transition accused Mueller of wrongfully obtaining thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration. The special counsel's office said all the material was legally obtained.

The meeting's outcome could deepen tensions as many Trump supporters question Mueller's credibility and Democrats express fear that the president will seek to fire the special counsel.

Ty Cobb, the White House lawyer overseeing the response to the Russia investigation, did not respond to phone calls and text messages seeking comment. Peter Carr, a spokesman for the special counsel, declined to comment.

White House lawyers have told the president he could be exonerated as early as the beginning of the year, after previously reassuring him that he would be cleared by Thanksgiving and

Christmas, as The Washington Post previously reported. They have stated publicly that all White House interviews are over and that Mueller's team is no longer seeking White House documents.

In the meeting this week, they plan to ask Mueller's investigators if they need more information before reaching a conclusion that the probe as related to Trump is complete, according to a person familiar with the Trump team's plan who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

The question that White House lawyers will pose to the special counsel's office, according to the person: "You've had all these witnesses, all these records. Is there anything else you need from the White House?"

Until now, Trump's legal team has repeatedly pledged cooperation with Mueller's office. A White House spokesman said there was no plan to change the strategy.

Trump's legal team has reassured him that it sees no evidence of collusion or obstruction in the records that it turned over, White House advisers said. While the lawyers have told Trump that they expect the investigative team will continue its work related to former campaign chairman Paul Manafort deep into next year, as well as possibly Flynn, they said they believe Mueller should be close to wrapping up the focus on the current White House.

Trump himself has expressed frustration with the probe but has shown optimism that it will not touch him. He told associates recently that he harbors no deep concern over the investigation and noted that his lawyers talk with Mueller's team regularly, according to a person who spoke with Trump last week and spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

When pressed by two advisers to take the matter more seriously and asked why he is so confident in his lawyers, Trump brushed off the concerns. "He is living in his own world," the person said, predicting that Trump would erupt at some point in 2018 if the probe continued to drag on.

Another associate said that even in private, Trump is "confident, even arrogant" that he has done

nothing wrong.

“There is no collusion,” the president said at the White House on Sunday, after saying he was not planning to fire Mueller.

Among people familiar with the probe, there is widespread skepticism that the special counsel’s investigation is drawing to a close.

Already, Manafort and his former deputy Rick Gates have been indicted on money-laundering and other charges related to work they did in Ukraine before the 2016 race. Two others have pleaded guilty and are cooperating, giving investigators new leads to pursue. Agents have gathered huge volumes of documents and conducted their first round of interviews with White House officials.

As recently as last week, Mueller’s team was still asking questions about the firing of James B. Comey as FBI director, one person said.

Legal experts said Mueller would have little incentive to clear the president or other White House aides while he is seeking more information from witnesses.

“I think it’s possible Mueller’s team could give them an idea of how much longer they anticipate their investigation will last,” said Peter Zeidenberg, the former deputy special counsel who helped investigate the leak of Valerie Plame’s covert role as a CIA operative. “I would be shocked if they have a timeline anything similar to what we’ve heard coming from the White House.”

“As far as a clean bill of health, I can’t imagine they are going to be prepared to make a decision like that at this point,” he said of the special counsel’s team. “They are not going to be in a position to make that call until they finish this case and finish discussing all the evidence they have.”

Mark Corallo, a former spokesman for Trump's legal team, said he thinks it is unlikely that the probe wraps up by the end of the year, but he said he believes it could conclude in the spring. He said that Mueller is aware of the political implications surrounding his investigation.

"Bob understands you can't have a president who is living under this cloud of uncertainty," Corallo said, adding that he believes it is possible that the special counsel will at some point call Trump's lawyers and say, "We are done with the president. There is nothing there."

The high-stakes meeting between White House lawyers and Mueller's team comes as conservative lawmakers and pundits have intensified their demands for a second special counsel to investigate the FBI, pointing to text messages between two former FBI officials discussing their dislike of Trump.

"We are now beginning to understand the magnitude of the insider bias on Mueller's team," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) said last week. Another member of the committee, Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), said Mueller and his team should wear "Democratic Donkeys or Hillary T-shirts."

A White House adviser said the president has enjoyed the attacks. In recent weeks, he has spoken to a number of Fox News hosts, Republican lawmakers and others who have castigated Mueller's team, the adviser said.

The attacks on Mueller's investigation grew this weekend after an attorney for the presidential transition told congressional investigators Saturday that thousands of pages of the organization's communications were provided to Mueller by the federal General Services Administration.

Trump's lawyers learned Mueller had the emails this month when witnesses were quizzed on the material. Some of the documents contained sensitive information that wasn't related to the Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the material.

A GSA spokeswoman declined to comment. Mueller's team said it obtained all documents

legally.

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-to-get-23-of-tax-cuts-for-individuals-under-gop-bill-1513644268>

Middle Class to Get 23% of Tax Cuts for Individuals Under GOP Bill

By Editors, 12/19/17

Middle-income households will get \$61 billion in tax cuts in 2019 under the Republican tax plan poised for passage this week, according to an analysis released late Monday by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation.

That amounts to 23% of the tax cuts that go directly to individuals. By 2027, however, these households would get a net tax increase, because tax cuts are set to expire under the proposed law.

The calculations are based on JCT estimates of cuts going to households that earn \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year in wages, dividends and benefits. Those households account for about half of all U.S. tax filers, with nearly a quarter making more and a quarter making less.

The Trump administration has emphasized the benefits of the tax plan for middle-income households.

America's most-affluent households, those earning \$500,000 or more a year, which account for 1% of filers, would also get \$61 billion in cuts in the first year, according to the JCT analysis. They would get a cut of \$12 billion by 2027.

That includes income earned by pass-through businesses such as partnerships and S-corporations that pay taxes on individual returns. It doesn't include the benefits of estate-tax reductions.

Much of the rest would go to businesses in the form of corporate tax cuts, according to the JCT analysis.

The tax plan took another step toward passage Monday, when Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who had been on the fence, said she would support the bill. Mr. Trump plans to sign the bill later this week.

Trump administration officials argue the business tax cuts will help individuals, too, because it will induce companies to hire more and boost workers' wages.

"I don't think it necessarily changes my life one way or another," said Lisa Joles of Concord, Ohio, who runs the heat and air-conditioning repair shop her parents started in the 1970s. Her business brought in about \$1.5 million this past year, and she takes home about \$50,000 a year. "It could give me or someone else in the middle class that little bit of extra money that they may go out and spend, and it may boost the economy, but I almost feel like that would be a short-term effect."

The muted reaction is consistent with polls showing that the tax cuts aren't very popular. A Quinnipiac University poll released last week found that 55% of those surveyed disapprove of the tax plan, compared with 26% who support it. Republicans were the only group who supported the tax plan, with the support of 66%.

Many households are still weighing how the complicated plan will affect them. The plan recasts many features of the individual tax code—doubling a child tax credit and the standard deduction for households, while narrowing deductions for state and local taxes, mortgages and the personal exemption. That means it will play out differently for many, depending on factors such as whether they live in high-tax states, have big mortgages or have many children.

Cory Dahl, 59, a pastor who lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., said that even though a few extra

hundred dollars a year won't make much difference, he is happy to get it. "Five hundred dollars is not a ton of money, but I'd rather have it in my bank account than in my tax payment," he said.

Mr. Dahl has taken the standard deduction in recent years, and he lives in a church-owned home, so he has no mortgage. He thinks raising the standard deduction will help middle-class households like his.

His niece, Katie Dahl, who lives 20 miles away in Baileys Harbor, Wis., is apprehensive. She said her biggest concern is the repeal of the Affordable Care Act requirement that individuals buy health insurance. Both Ms. Dahl, 34, and her husband, Rich Higdon, who is a musician and a potter, rely on the ACA exchange for a heavily subsidized health-insurance plan. They pay \$12 a month for a silver-level plan that covers both of them. With an income of about \$41,000 a year, Ms. Dahl says the ACA has made them both confident that they could survive as self-employed artists.

"I'm worried what the mandate will do to premiums, and if it will go so far as to start the unraveling of Obamacare, which has been a big boon to us financially," she said.

While the middle class as a whole will see benefits, some people will end up worse off. Using an alternative measure of household income, the Tax Policy Center found that of those households in the very middle of the income distribution, making \$48,600 to \$86,100 a year, 91.3% would receive a tax cut next year. But 7.3% would receive a tax increase. By 2025, 10.9% would receive a tax increase.

Many taxpayers are worried that they will fall into that latter group. Jon Rose, 45, who runs a car-detailing shop in Carlisle, Pa., could see a cut from his current top tax rate of 25% because he runs an S corporation, a pass-through business that is eligible for a 20% deduction from business income if it meets certain conditions. His accountant told him he would likely save about \$3,000 as a result of tax changes. The problem, he said, is that his accountant also said he has about \$16,000 worth of personal exemptions that he would no longer be able to claim.

Congress has raised the child-tax credit to \$2,000 a child, but he was even dubious about how much that would help him. "I only have two kids, it's not like I have 16," said Mr. Rose, whose wife is a high-school teacher. "It doesn't sound great."

He said that if he somehow ends up saving an extra \$500 or even \$1,000, that wouldn't mean too much to him. "I wouldn't even notice," he said. "It wouldn't make any difference, especially if it's just coming out gradually over time. If it's \$1,000, it's \$40 a paycheck. That's dinner."

Corrections & Amplifications

An earlier version of this article incorrectly reported that middle-income households would receive \$144 billion in total tax cuts over a decade under the Republican tax plan, or 10% of the total net tax cut. It also incorrectly reported that affluent households making more than \$500,000 would receive \$171 billion in total tax cuts over a decade. Those calculations were based on an incorrect reading of tables released Monday by the Joint Committee on Taxation. The article also incorrectly reported that households making \$500,000 or more comprise 6% of total filers. They comprise 1% of total filers.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3h

DOW RISES 5000 POINTS ON THE YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER - MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

6.1K 8.2K 36K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2h

Stocks and the economy have a long way to go after the Tax Cut Bill is totally understood and appreciated in scope and size. Immediate expensing will have a big impact. Biggest Tax Cuts and Reform EVER passed. Enjoy, and create many beautiful JOBS!

5.8K 5.2K 24K

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Friedman, Lisa
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 3:41:36 PM
Subject: contract info

Hi Jahan.

Here's a copy of the contract for Definers Public Affairs

<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>

As you'll see under competition details, it says the contract was not competed, and the reason it gives is "only one source - other."

Under 'numbers of offers received' it says: 1

By contrast, for example, here is the contract with Bulletin. It says under competition details that it was "competed under SAP." (simplified acquisition procedures)

<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=3B728BF9-DC6E-45F1-BF65-BA5E42ACFE4C&AwardID=49688963&AwardType=C>

So - it appears clear here that the contract with Definers was a no-bid contract. If that's not in fact the case, then I'd like to request some explanation as to why it clearly says so on the contract itself.

And if indeed, as the contract states, it was a sole-source notification, then please provide an explanation as to why.

Thanks,
Lisa

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office
(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:29:27 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

Will handle.

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Tue 4/25/2017 5:23:45 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: House Oversight Committee: FLYNN did not disclose Russia payments -- IVANKA TRUMP booed in Germany -- Ex-Christie aide MARIA COMELLA joins CUOMO's staff

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/25/2017 01:19 PM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)), ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Tuesday afternoon.

NBC'S HALLIE JACKSON SCORES AN IVANKA INTERVIEW IN BERLIN -- "While visiting Germany in her first visit overseas as a member of the presidential staff, Ivanka Trump downplayed front-page headlines there calling her a 'loyal accomplice' to her father. 'I don't like the word 'accomplice' because in this context, I don't know that that's productive,' she said in an exclusive interview with NBC News' White House correspondent Hallie Jackson.

"One of the things that I value about my father, as first a businessman and now as the leader of our country, is that he curates ideas and he likes to hear from people with divergent viewpoints. And that's not always true in politics. It's actually seldom true."
<http://on.today.com/2p1iVhH>

HMM... -- "First on CNN: Ex-Christie aide joins Cuomo as new chief of staff," by Javier De Diego and Jamie Gangel: "Maria Comella confirmed to CNN in an exclusive interview that she will be officially named to the position Tuesday after spending the last few months advising the Democratic governor. A lifelong Republican, this is the first time Comella has ever worked for a Democrat.

"Right now, it is important to be an active participant in our democratic process and political party matters less than the things we can accomplish when working together,' Comella told CNN in a brief interview by email. 'At a time of turmoil in Washington, I believe the states can and will play an important role and Governor Cuomo has the ability to find common ground when it's needed and get things done.'
<http://cnn.it/2pexeOA>

A FLYNN UPDATE -- " Lawmakers: Flynn did not disclose Russia payments in security clearance application," by Austin Wright: "Former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn did not disclose payments for a 2015 speech in Moscow in his security clearance application for 2016, the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee

told reporters Tuesday. Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) and Oversight Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) sent a request last month to the White House and federal agencies seeking the security clearance applications. Cummings said the White House declined in a letter to provide requested information about Flynn to the Oversight panel. Flynn resigned as national security adviser after it became clear he had misled his colleagues about the nature of his phone calls with Russia's ambassador." <http://politi.co/2p1eZNR>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- WHAT REPUBLICANS WANT YOU TO SEE -- The RNC is releasing a new video slamming Democrats for "100 days of obstruction" in Congress during President Donald Trump's first 100 days in office. <http://bit.ly/2olsGPg>

ANNIE "INTERNATIONAL" KARNI in BERLIN -- "Ivanka Trump gets booed, hissed at during Berlin event": "On her first international trip as an official representative of the United States, the first daughter was put on the spot about her father's attitudes toward women, booed and hissed at by the crowd, and grilled by the moderator about what, exactly, her role is in President Donald Trump's administration. 'You're the first daughter of the United States, and you're also an assistant to the president,' the moderator, WirtschaftsWoche editor-in-chief Miriam Meckel, said. 'The German audience is not that familiar with the concept of a first daughter. I'd like to ask you, what is your role, and who are you representing, your father as president of the United States, the American people, or your business?' ... She did not define what her new role as a senior White House official entailed, but said that she cared 'very much about empowering women in the workplace' and defined her goal as enacting 'incremental positive change. That is my goal. This is very early for me, I'm listening, learning.'" <http://politi.co/2olfOIW>

REMEMBER JARED AND IVANKA ON CLIMATE CHANGE? -- @AriNatter: "NEWS: Energy Secretary Rick Perry says U.S. Should Renegotiate Paris Climate Deal"

-- A REMINDER - "Exxon, Shell Join Ivanka Trump to Defend Paris Climate Pact," by Bloomberg's Jennifer Dlouhy on April 18 <https://bloom.bg/2osTgjd>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** "It is now more important than ever for the business community and government to come together and collaborate to find meaningful solutions and develop thoughtful policies that create economic growth and opportunity for all." Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2pNe2Kn> *****

MEDIAWATCH -- "Breitbart Has Been Denied Permanent Congressional Press Credentials," by BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg: "Next month, reporters at Breitbart News will lose their press access to the halls of Congress....Breitbart has been on a months-long quest to win the permanent passes, but committee members on Tuesday said they still had unanswered questions about the secretive conservative media company." <http://bzfd.it/2peQ5J0>

HOT ONLINE -- JACK SHAFER and TUCKER DOHERTY in the May/June issue of

POLITICO MAGAZINE -- "The Media Bubble Is Worse Than You Think": "The national media really does work in a bubble, something that wasn't true as recently as 2008. And the bubble is growing more extreme. Concentrated heavily along the coasts, the bubble is both geographic and political. If you're a working journalist, odds aren't just that you work in a pro-Clinton county--odds are that you reside in one of the nation's most pro-Clinton counties. And you've got company: If you're a typical reader of Politico, chances are you're a citizen of bubbleville, too." <http://politi.co/2olhthM>

GOP'S EMILY'S LIST -- "Last year's 'Republican Women for Hillary' are now fighting to take GOP back from Trump," by Mic's Celeste Katz: "The team that brought America 'Republican Women for Hillary' is recalibrating in the age of Trump, launching a new, multi-platform campaign for change as 'Republican Women for Progress.' ... Their goals are ambitious and developing. They want to turn the focus of GOP politics away from wedge issues like abortion and bring more Republican women into civic life. ... In a nutshell, [Jennifer Pierotti Lim and Meghan Milloy] are trying to make an argument to women that the Democrats haven't cornered the market on 'progressive' thought. Ahead of their relaunch, the D.C.-based duo talked to Mic about their vision of offering a 'reasonable Republican version of EMILY's List.'" <http://bit.ly/2oleXYD> ... ***Their Crowdpac page*** <http://bit.ly/2olj3jD>

WHAT TRUMP TWEETED -- @realDonaldTrump at 7:23 a.m.: "Proud of @IvankaTrump for her leadership on these important issues. Looking forward to hearing her speak at the W20!" ... **at 8:30 a.m.:** "Canada has made business for our dairy farmers in Wisconsin and other border states very difficult. We will not stand for this. Watch!" ... **at 8:36 a.m.:** "Don't let the fake media tell you that I have changed my position on the WALL. It will get built and help stop drugs, human trafficking etc."

-- **FOR THE RECORD:** Most people didn't write that he "changed" his position on the wall. What people said is that he would defer the fight until September.

-- **"Trump, speaking at Holocaust memorial: 'We'll never be silent,'"** by Louis Nelson <http://politi.co/2olt7sU>

TRUMP INC. -- "At Trump Tower, an 'amazing' number of condos for sale or rent," by the Chicago Tribune's Gail MarksJarvis: "Chicago's Trump Tower has an unusually large number of condominiums for sale and for rent, and real estate agents predict that a glut of available units in the building may pressure owners to drop their prices. Already renters in Trump Tower say they have been able to get sizable discounts. ... About 10.7 percent of the building's 486 residential units are currently for sale - a far higher percentage than comparable downtown condo buildings." <http://trib.in/2olxJ28>

TWEET DU JOUR -- WaPo's Supreme Court reporter Robert Barnes (@scotusreporter): "Turns out cell phones ARE allowed in #scotus courtroom. A red-faced Justice Breyer's went off during oral argument this morning."

OFF MESSAGE PODCAST -- Thirty years ago, writing against the backdrop of Soviet-

dominated Eastern Europe, novelist Margaret Atwood called the women in the "The Handmaid's Tale" who were standing up to the fictional Puritan-inspired totalitarian government "the resistance." In the latest episode of Off Message, Isaac Dove sits down in a two-part interview, one with Margaret Atwood and Elizabeth Moss from the Hulu series, A Handmaid's Tale, and second, with Stephanie Schriock, president of EMILY's List. <http://politi.co/2p14LgD> ... **Subscribe** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

AT FOX -- "Murdoch Family Rushes to Put Out Fires at Fox News," by Cynthia Littleton in Variety: "When James became CEO of 21st Century Fox and Lachlan was named executive chairman alongside Rupert, there was much speculation about whether the scions would have the same business savvy and drive that made their father one of the most storied CEOs of the 20th century. As it turns out, a big early test of James' and Lachlan's derring-do has come in the form of judgment calls on decisions that have put people over profits." <http://bit.ly/2oInX04> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2oHVTdi>

-- "Show of Support? Rupert Murdoch Dines Out With Fox News Execs Shine and Abernethy," by Mediaite's Colby Hall: "Murdoch, current executive chairman and CEO of Fox News, took network co-presidents Bill Shine and Jack Abernethy to ... 'power lunch' spot Marea in Manhattan." <http://bit.ly/2oHRxms> ... **AP pic of the three** <http://bit.ly/2qbnPX2>

NEW LOOK -- The Huffington Post has officially rebranded itself as **HUFFPOST**, and rolled out a new website design to boot. HuffPost's editor in chief Lydia Polgreen writes a letter detailing the changes <http://huff.to/2oI3GYx>

POLITICO'S NEW CEO -- HOT ONLINE -- LUKAS ALPERT in the **WSJ**: "Before joining FBR, Mr. Steel served as an official in the Agriculture Department and was a special assistant to President Bill Clinton. Mr. Steel has donated heavily to Democratic candidates, including Hillary Clinton, campaign-finance records show. 'I skew moderate politically,' Mr. Steel said. 'At the end of the day, I am a businessman and this administration has been very good for our business so far.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2q33Ltz>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Ann Coulter vows to make her speech at Berkeley -- Massachusetts lawmakers go to Washington <http://politi.co/2oIBgNS>

VALLEY TALK -- Waymo today has announced the first public trial of their self-driving cars. Over the last two months, the company has been quietly allowing members of the public in Arizona to use their fleet of self-driving cars to get around. They're now opening applications so that anyone in the Phoenix area can apply to be a part of their early rider program. **Company blog post** <http://bit.ly/2q1h5M5> ... **2-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2p0SOaO>

WEEKEND WEDDING -- CBS News producer **Duncan McKenna** and Lieutenant **John Keener** of the U.S. Navy got married Saturday at the Meridian House in Washington, D.C. There were bagpipes at the end of the wedding procession, John sabered a champagne bottle, and his Navy friends performed a ceremonial sword arch for the

bride and groom. The couple both went to Duke but met on Tinder after the groom was stationed in D.C.; John is also a graduate of Hotchkiss. Among the food served was lamb chops with mint Chimichurri and three kinds of creme brûlée; guests later danced to Garth Brooks. **Pics by former Bush 43 WH photographer Paul Morse**

<http://bit.ly/2q0jpDn> ... <http://bit.ly/2pvCsIB> ... <http://bit.ly/2qaaoXA> ...
<http://bit.ly/2pe0sNa>

-- **SPOTTED** : Jan Crawford, Catherine Reynolds, Chip Reid, Chloe Arensberg, Grace Lamb-Atkinson, Paul Morse, Jenna Sakwa, Donald Judd, Ward Sloane, Suzanne (Suzy) Kianpour, Cate Sadler, Dianna Colasurdo, Josh Schwerin, Matt Sandretto, Dolly Madison McKenna, Matthew Douglas, Oliver Schulze.

TRANSITIONS -- **Chris Martin** is joining the NRCC as the new northeast regional press secretary, after working at the Wisconsin GOP. **Jesse Hunt** has been promoted to comms director at the NRCC. He is Matt Gorman's deputy ... **Julia Abad**, **Nisha Biswal**, and **Mark Feierstein** have joined Albright Stonebridge Group as senior advisers, and **Ignacio Petrocchi** has joined as an adviser. <http://politi.co/2ol9PE5>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Business not only has a responsibility and a vested interest in helping solve the challenges facing our communities but also a vital contribution to make. The private sector's capabilities, ingenuity and assets have time and again demonstrated their capacity to drive transformative change. Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Letter to Shareholders <http://politi.co/2ocAUmI> *****

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[View online](#)

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Lisa Friedman[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:48:40 PM
Subject: RE: Follow up question on MJ story

Checking with the folks in the office of acquisition management.

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:21 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Follow up question on MJ story

And why was this a no-bid contract when other companies perform the same service?

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

On Dec 15, 2017, at 10:20 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM

To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Evan.Halper@latimes.com[Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 9/22/2017 3:29:47 PM
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

I have a minor typo -- should say Mr. Cox said he ...

On Sep 21, 2017, at 11:40 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been

long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt's decision to partner with states to protect the environment. "Southerland questioned Pruitt's belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of 'running roughshod over states' rights." ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn't want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. "Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. 'We don't believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,' Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour." ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. "Trump's fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this spring, as they traditionally have done." ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House's Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. "First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president's budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades." ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama's budget received 1 vote. "President Obama's budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season." ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama's budget. "President Obama's budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House's rejection in March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama's budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year." ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress

to ignore the budget. "Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected priorities that "aren't necessarily ours." ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Sat 10/7/2017 1:02:06 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017, THROUGH MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017, THROUGH MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2017**

Saturday's (October 6, 2017) In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CBS

Print: National Journal

Radio: AP Radio

Saturday's (October 7, 2017) Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CBS

Print: Daily Mail

Radio: NBC

Sunday's (October 8, 2017) In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CNN

Print: The Root

Radio: AURN

Monday's (October 9, 2017) In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: FOX

Print: Talking Points Memo

Radio: VOA

Saturday, October 7, 2017

EDT

8:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

3:45PM Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time

Joint Base Andrews

Virginia Gate

5:00PM THE PRESIDENT departs the White House en route to Joint Base Andrews

South Lawn

Open Press

5:20PM THE PRESIDENT departs Washington, D.C. en route to Greensboro, NC

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

6:25PM **THE PRESIDENT arrives in Greensboro, NC**

Piedmont Triad International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

7:00PM **THE PRESIDENT participates in a roundtable with RNC supporters**

Private Residence

Closed Press

7:50PM **THE PRESIDENT gives remarks at the RNC dinner**

Private Residence

Closed Press

9:15PM **THE PRESIDENT departs Greensboro, NC en route to**

Washington, D.C.

Piedmont Triad International Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:15PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in Washington, D.C.

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:35PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Lawn

Open Press

Sunday, October 8, 2017

EDT

TBD In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

No public events scheduled

Monday, October 9, 2017

EDT

TBD In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

No public events scheduled

###

Unsubscribe

The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW · Washington DC 20500 · 202-456-1111

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 6/30/2017 11:42:46 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): What JOE and MIKA said about POTUS -- TRUMP calls for repeal, and later replace -- WHO'S IN JARED's 'circle of trust' -- SPOTTED at Carol Lee's party at Trump hotel

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
06/30/2017 07:39 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

BULLETIN -- THE PRESIDENT SAYS HE'S SENDING "FEDERAL HELP" TO CHICAGO -- statement at **6:48 a.m.**: "Crime and killings in Chicago have reached such epidemic proportions that I am sending in Federal help. 1714 shootings in Chicago this year!" ... **TRUMP** also said this on Twitter at **6:37 a.m.** : "If Republican Senators are unable to pass what they are working on now, they should immediately REPEAL, and then REPLACE at a later date!"

-- THIS WAS THE GOP LEADERSHIP'S ORIGINAL PLAN! But now, many Republicans would be opposed to this. First, there are procedural issues. And second, ripping out the health care system without a replacement is not an option for most conservatives, who spent much of the winter calling for a simultaneous repeal and replace.

SCOOP - first posted on POLITICO Pro at 7:51 p.m. Thursday: **"Trump's trade plan sets up global clash over 'America First' strategy,"** by Andrew Restuccia and Nancy Cook: "In a bid to keep his campaign promise to crack down on unfair trade practices, President Donald Trump is weighing trade restrictions on steel imports from countries like China, according to two administration officials. ... The president's advisers are coalescing around a tailored approach that would target the steel imports of individual countries." <http://politi.co/2s97FyZ>

Good Friday morning and happy getaway day. JOE SCARBOROUGH and MIKA BRZEZINSKI appeared on "Morning Joe" at the top of the 7 a.m. hour to respond to the president's tweets about them. Before they came on, they played a clip of Ivanka decrying "viciousness."

-- **MIKA:** "I think it's been fascinating and frightening and really sad for our country." ... "I'm fine. My family brought me up really tough. This is absolutely nothing -- for me personally. But I am very concerned as to what this once again reveals about the president of the United States."

-- **JOE:** "We're ok, the country's not." ... "He, for some reason, takes things so much more personally with women. He's so much more vicious with women." ... "He attacks women because he fears women."

-- **MIKA:** "Big picture: my father just passed away. My mother had two heart attacks. My daughter just lost a friend. Those are the things I'm really worried about."

JOE said they got calls from ambassadors saying "we stand by you, we stand by Mika, we stand by the show, this is shocking, we don't even know how to respond to this as a country, we don't know how to deal with this guy."

-- **WILLIE GEIST** at the top of the 6 a.m. hour: "Mika's smart, she's strong, she makes people in power uncomfortable and she fears absolutely no one." ... **DONNY DEUTSCH** on the president, who Willie noted has known Deutsch for years: "He's a pig. He's a vulgar pig."

JOE and MIKA'S WAPO OP-ED -- POSTED AT 5:10 A.M. -- "Donald Trump is not well" -- "President Trump launched personal attacks against us Thursday, but our concerns about his unmoored behavior go far beyond the personal. America's leaders and allies are asking themselves yet again whether this man is fit to be president. We have our doubts, but we are both certain that the man is not mentally equipped to continue watching our show, 'Morning Joe.'

"The president's unhealthy obsession with our show has been in the public record for months, and we are seldom surprised by his posting nasty tweets about us. During the campaign, the Republican nominee called Mika 'neurotic' and promised to attack us personally after the campaign ended. This year, top White House staff members warned that the National Enquirer was planning to publish a negative article about us unless we begged the president to have the story spiked. We ignored their desperate pleas.

"Mr. Trump claims that we asked to join him at Mar-a-Lago three nights in a row. That is false. He also claimed that he refused to see us. That is laughable.

"The president-elect invited us both to dinner on Dec. 30. Joe attended because Mika did not want to go. After listening to the president-elect talk about his foreign policy plans, Joe was asked by a disappointed Mr. Trump the next day if Mika could also visit Mar-a-Lago that night. She reluctantly agreed to go. After we arrived, the president-elect pulled us into his family's living quarters with his wife, Melania, where we had a pleasant conversation. We politely declined his repeated invitations to attend a New Year's Eve party, and we were back in our car within 15 minutes. Mr. Trump also claims that Mika

was 'bleeding badly from a face-lift.' That is also a lie.

-- **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:** Mika didn't have a face-lift but had "a little skin under her chin tweaked, but this was hardly a state secret. Her mother suggested she do so, and all those around her were aware of this mundane fact." ... "During the height of the 2016 presidential campaign, Joe often listened to Trump staff members complain about their boss's erratic behavior, including a top campaign official who was as close to the Republican candidate as anyone." <http://wapo.st/2stqLPvv>

-- **ANY GUESSES** on who the campaign official "as close to the Republican candidate as anyone" is? When the president reads that, he won't be pleased with, well, the "campaign official ... as close to the Republican candidate as anyone." ***Take our anonymous Playbook poll and we'll share the results in Power Briefing later today:*** <http://bit.ly/2tsxLAI>

WELL, if the president punches back at people who hit at him, he'll probably bring out a bazooka for this one.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ... Trumpworld enjoys this war with the media. It satisfies his electoral base. It does absolutely nothing for Washington, which he needs to keep happy in order to pass legislation and govern, which is now his job.

-- **@rickklein:** "Kellyanne says she wants 'a full conversation about policy' now. @GMA"

THE MEDIA was covering health care policy obsessively until the president raised this issue. The conversation in the Capitol remains squarely focused on whether Republicans will be able to pass their repeal and replace bill.

THE DUSTUP is a battle of Acela corridor titans. Whatever Trump - or anyone - thinks about "Morning Joe," its relevance is unquestionable. It has a steady stream of elected officials and top-notch journalists every weekday - which is why Trump probably gets tweaked when it doesn't skew in his direction. Most of his barbs, as we've seen, are reserved for elite media, which he simultaneously blasts and courts.

BUT, BUT, BUT ... This feud isn't really registering outside of D.C. and New York.
AROUND THE COUNTRY -- MEH -- A number of newspapers send their front pages to Playbookland overnight. Only a few papers this morning displayed Trump's vulgar remarks.

WHAT AMERICA CARES ABOUT MORE THAN THIS ... THE STATE (Columbia, South Carolina): "He delivered a giraffe, saved a sea lion - and now, Riverbanks' Krantz is retiring" <http://politi.co/2twFzSA> ... **THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH:** "Water rate limit may halt Pickaway plan" <http://politi.co/2u5NzqM> ... **CHARLOTTE OBSERVER:** "ISIS investigations underway in N.C." <http://politi.co/2uqRrlu> ... **DES MOINES REGISTER:** "TORNADOES LEAVE THEIR MARK ON IOWA" <http://politi.co/2stognV> ... **CINCINNATI ENQUIRER:** "SOCCER'S MR. CLUTCH" <http://politi.co/2sYmQhq>

-- **ARIZONA REPUBLIC** teased the Trump/"Morning Joe" feud on the lower right-hand side of A1 with the headline, "Insults by Trump again grab attention"

<http://politi.co/2stxngT> ... **LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL**, recently purchased by Sheldon Adelson's family, featured the story prominently as a centerpiece. They screenshotted the tweets. **HEADLINE:** "Trump tweets draw fire from both sides ... Attacks on media critics lead to calls for civility" <http://politi.co/2u5GCWu>

MAGGIE HABERMAN and **GLENN THRUSH** wrote the lead story on A1 of the NYT with the headline: "TRUMP'S TAUNTS AIMED AT TV HOST PROMPT REBUKES ... GENDER-ORIENTED BARBS ... New Charges of Sexism, Even From Fellow Republicans" **Story** <http://nyti.ms/2t7ZAM4> ... **A1 PDF** <http://nyti.ms/2uqvJy7>

N.Y. DAILY NEWS -- "HUMILIATION" <http://nydn.us/2truCS1>

IMPORTANT GRAPH FROM WAPO'S JENNA JOHNSON AND ABBY PHILLIPS: "[B]y going after a powerful female journalist's appearance and mental health, Trump not only distracted the country from his legislative agenda for a full news cycle, but also added yet another data point to the argument that he treats women differently from men." <http://wapo.st/2sYb9Hq>

-- **TARA PALMERI: "White House council for women and girls goes dark under Trump** : The administration is evaluating whether to keep the office, created under President Barack Obama to focus on gender equity." <http://politi.co/2uqZkaK>

PUTTING IT INTO CONTEXT -- "Trump, Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough: A Roller-Coaster Relationship," by NYT's Liam Stack: <http://nyti.ms/2sY0M6z>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** A new study found that pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) reduced spending in Medicare Part D by 58 percent in 2014, driving down costs for the government, taxpayers, and beneficiaries. The study forecasts that PBMs will save \$1,800 per Medicare beneficiary, per year over the next ten years. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is speaking to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and then will have South Korean President Moon Jae-in at the White House for a meeting and a public statement. Trump and the first lady head to Bedminster, New Jersey, at 4 p.m.

HAPPENING NEXT WEEK -- TRUMP TO EUROPE -- "Angela Merkel Sets Collision Course With Trump Ahead of G-20," by NYT's Melissa Eddy in Berlin: "A combative Chancellor Angela Merkel set herself on a collision course with President Trump and his 'America first' agenda on Thursday, predicting 'very difficult' talks over climate change and trade when she hosts a summit meeting of 20 global leaders next week.

"Speaking before Parliament on a day when she also gathered European Union leaders in Berlin to form a common front, the German leader made no bones about the 'obvious' disagreement with the United States. 'Whoever believes the problems of this world can be solved by isolationism and protectionism is making a tremendous error,' Ms. Merkel said, in what will most likely be her final address before Parliament before closing out her third term in office." <http://nyti.ms/2uq4tjc>

-- **"Long anticipated Trump-Putin meeting raises worries,"** by Michael Crowley: "President Donald Trump plans to sit down with Vladimir Putin next week, pursuing warmer relations with the Russian leader despite multiple investigations into his campaign's alleged ties to the Kremlin. The expected meeting in at the annual G-20 summit in Hamburg, confirmed Thursday by National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, will be the first between Trump and Putin after more than a years of intense scrutiny of their relationship. The two men have spoken on the phone twice since Trump took office.

"It is unclear what messages Trump might deliver to Putin at a time of high tension between Washington and Moscow over Russia's interference in the 2016 election and its military presence in Ukraine and Syria. But many national security experts and Russia hawks inside the Trump administration are concerned that a president who has spoken for months about the prospect of a friendship with Putin might be too eager to please his strong-willed Russian counterpart." <http://politi.co/2t6HR7M>

THE HEALTH CARE CONUNDRUM -- "Dazed GOP bolts Washington in health care disarray," by Burgess Everett, Seung Min Kim and Sarah Karlin-Smith: "Senate Republicans skipped town on Thursday afternoon facing stiff internal opposition to their health care proposal and a July 4th recess where critics will pummel their effort to repeal Obamacare. Though the Senate whirled to life with deal-making between Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his members, senators were dazed by the up-and-down week and nowhere near a plan that could get 50 votes. The GOP is planning to write new language to be analyzed by Friday, but were far from reaching a broad agreement as senators had hoped.

"In some ways, we're going around in circles but I think we're getting closer on some elements,' said Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.). 'This is complex.' And there's no guarantee that time back home will make things better. 'Our members seem to have too much information and are almost in mental lockdown,' said one Republican senator, who was perplexed at where the party goes from here. 'I can't imagine going home for 10 days is helpful.'" <http://politi.co/2u2w8XZ>

NEXT STEPS: "The best party leaders could hope for was to send a collection of new proposals to the Congressional Budget Office to analyze over the recess, which would likely include maintaining Obamacare's so-called net investment income tax that levels a surcharge on some high-income earners. The money would then be used to help low-income people afford health care."

-- **TRUTH TALK:** The longer the Senate bill is out there for review and the more senators hear from constituents that they don't like what's in the bill, the harder it is going to be to pass it.

TURN OF THE SCREW -- "GOP Operative Sought Clinton Emails From Hackers, Implied a Connection to Flynn," by WSJ's Shane Harris: "Before the 2016 presidential election, a longtime Republican opposition researcher mounted an independent campaign to obtain emails he believed were stolen from Hillary Clinton's private server, likely by Russian hackers. In conversations with members of his circle and with others he tried to recruit to help him, the GOP operative, Peter W. Smith, implied he was working with retired Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn, at the time a senior adviser to then-candidate Donald Trump. ...

"What role, if any, Mr. Flynn may have played in Mr. Smith's project is unclear. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Mr. Smith said he knew Mr. Flynn, but he never stated that Mr. Flynn was involved. Mr. Flynn didn't respond to requests for comment. A Trump campaign official said that Mr. Smith didn't work for the campaign, and that if Mr. Flynn coordinated with him in any way, it would have been in his capacity as a private individual. The White House declined to comment." <http://on.wsj.com/2trcaZk>

KNOWING JARED -- "Inside Jared Kushner's circle of trust," by Annie Karni: "In his former life as a Manhattan real estate developer and newspaper owner, Jared Kushner often lunched with Alan Patricof, a venture capitalist and Democratic fundraiser with a decades-long allegiance to the Clintons. Patricof, 81, fit the profile of a typical Kushner friend - a wealthy patrician New Yorker old enough to be his father, whom Kushner sought out for advice (see: Rupert Murdoch, Joel Klein and Ron Perelman). ...

"In his first six months in Washington, he's developed a new circle of advisers - one that's more political - while leaving some of his earlier confidants behind. He's discreet about who he calls upon for outside advice in his White House role. But some of the new additions to his cadre are people like former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Sen. Ted Cruz's former campaign manager, Jeff Roe, whose data-driven primary campaign caught his attention.

"The shift from his old life in New York to his current political reality is one Kushner wasn't necessarily prepared for when he moved his family to Washington to join his father-in-law's administration. 'This is not what he expected,' said one associate who speaks with him regularly. Most surprising to the new-to-politics senior adviser, according to multiple people with ties to Kushner, is the snakepit environment of the West Wing, and the backbiting from rival colleagues." ***With cameos by Ken Kurson, Jamie Gorelick, Sen. Bob Corker, Steve Schwarzman, Ron Dermer, Yousef Al Otaiba*** <http://politi.co/2t7eIJG>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Centrist Republicans mobilize against draft GOP budget," by Rachael Bade and Sarah Ferris: "Centrist House Republicans are lining up to oppose a draft GOP budget curbing entitlement spending - and threatening to vote

against the plan if they don't get a bipartisan deal to increase spending caps. Tuesday Group co-chairman Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) is gathering signatures on a letter asking Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to intervene in House Budget Chairwoman Diane Black's plan to curb \$200 billion in mandatory spending in the GOP budget.

"The Tuesday Group letter - which sources say has about 20 signatories so far - warns that the Tennessee Republican's proposal is 'not practical' and 'could imperil tax reform,' according to a draft letter obtained by POLITICO. The letter also encourages GOP leaders to work with Democrats to reach a budget agreement setting higher spending levels for fiscal 2018 - something the letter suggests could be paired with a vote to raise the debt ceiling." <http://politi.co/2t6bs1p>

-- **WHY THIS MATTERS:** Congress needs to pass a budget to do tax reform. If they don't, tax reform is practically impossible. Conservatives are squeezing Paul Ryan from the right. And moderates are now pushing him from the middle.

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "U.S. plans to sell Taiwan about \$1.42 billion in arms," by Reuters' David Brunnstrom and Arshad Mohammed: "The United States plans to sell Taiwan \$1.42 billion in arms, the first such sale under the administration of Donald Trump and a move sure to anger China, whose help the president has been seeking to rein in North Korea. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert told reporters the administration had told Congress of the seven proposed sales on Thursday." <http://reut.rs/2tshGKS>

-- **AP/BEIJING** : "Beijing has strongly protested a U.S. plan to sell \$1.4 billion worth of arms to Taiwan and demanded that the deal be canceled. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang on Friday said Washington should immediately stop the sale to avoid harming relations with Beijing. He said the deal would severely damage China's sovereignty and security interests and runs contrary to Washington's commitment to a 'one-China' policy." <http://bit.ly/2tr1mdY>

THE JUICE ...

-- **KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON** is being nominated as the next NATO ambassador. "Hutchison's nomination to be the U.S. representative to the military alliance comes amid scrutiny of the organization from Trump. The president demanded in May that NATO member nations spend more on defense, saying that it was unfair to American taxpayers if they don't meet commitments to do so." <http://politi.co/2tqNoc4>

-- **@JimPressOffice** (Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner's account): "A fun moment between friends: @SpeakerRyan gives the Dean his belated birthday gift on the Speaker's Balcony! #WI05" <http://bit.ly/2sXvjRG>

--**"Here's the Audio of Donald Trump's Private RNC Fundraiser at His Own Hotel,"** by The Intercept's Ryan Grim and Lee Fang: <http://bit.ly/2trpwF5>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Former President Barack Obama greets a staffer during his visit to Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on June 29. | N. Agung Nugroho/AP Photo

IN MIDTOWN WEST -- "CBS News President Tells Staff 'Evening News' Anchor Transition Didn't Go Smoothly, Hurt Morale," by Hollywood Reporter's Jeremy Barr: "In late May, it came out that after six years as anchor of the CBS Evening News, Scott Pelley would be vacating the chair. In an employee town hall Thursday morning, CBS News president David Rhodes was asked if he thinks the rocky transition has hurt company morale.

"I absolutely do. And I'm concerned about it," he said, according to someone who viewed the event. "Transitions are difficult. We've had some very smooth ones while I've been here, and this one wasn't one of the smoothest. And I'm concerned about that. It didn't go the way that I wanted it to go." <http://bit.ly/2sYqeJ1>

-- THE QUESTION OF THE SUMMER: Who does CBS choose as its next evening news host?

SHOT -- "Administration Moves to Carry Out Partial Travel Ban," by NYT's Gardiner Harris, Mike Shear and Ron Nixon: "The Trump administration moved aggressively on Thursday to fulfill one of the president's most contentious campaign promises, banning entry into the United States by refugees from around the world and prohibiting most visitors from six predominantly Muslim countries. Freed by the Supreme Court to partly revive President Trump's travel ban, administration officials said the American border would be shut to those groups unless specific individuals can prove they have close family members living in the United States, or are coming to attend a university or accept a job offer.

"Officials said those exceptions would be defined narrowly. In a lengthy cable sent to embassies and consulates around the world, officials said that extended family connections would not be enough to evade the president's ban on entry. Parents, including in-laws, are considered 'close family,' but grandparents are not, for instance. Stepsiblings and half-siblings will be allowed, but not nieces or nephews. Late Thursday, the Trump administration added people who are engaged to be married - who originally were not considered to be close family members - to the list of sufficient connections." <http://nyti.ms/2tsD3Mv>

CHASER -- HAWAII, AGAIN -- "Hawaii challenges Trump stance on Supreme Court travel ban ruling," by Josh Gerstein: "The State of Hawaii is asking a federal judge to rule that the Trump administration's latest plan to carry out President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order defies the ruling the Supreme Court issued on the

subject just four days ago. In a new court filing, lawyers for the state and for a Hawaii Imam say guidance the Trump administration issued Thursday takes too narrow a view of what family relationships qualify to exempt a foreigner from the travel ban and would deny admission to refugees who should be exempt from the ban due to their connections to a U.S. refugee aid agency.

"This Court should clarify as soon as possible that the Supreme Court meant what it said, and that foreign nationals that credibly claim connections with this country cannot be denied entry under the President's illegal Order,' Hawaii Attorney General Douglas Chin and private counsel Neal Katyal wrote in a motion filed Thursday with U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson." <http://politi.co/2ssCKNa>

WHAT CHRIS COX IS READING -- "Federal judge blocks new California gun control law requiring disposal of large-capacity magazines," by L.A. Times' Patrick McGreevy: "Many California firearm owners were given a reprieve Thursday from making a tough decision after a federal judge temporarily blocked a key provision of the state's gun control laws approved last year in the wake of the San Bernardino terrorist attack. At the request of attorneys for the National Rifle Assn., U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez issued a preliminary injunction blocking a law that requires Californians to dispose of large-capacity ammunition magazines by Saturday or face fines and possible jail time." <http://lat.ms/2s7DEzn>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** A new study projects pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) will save Medicare Part D \$896 billion over ten years. PBMs drive savings for taxpayers and seniors by negotiating discounts from drug manufacturers; by encouraging the use of lower cost, clinically equivalent drugs; and by providing clinical programs that improve health outcomes. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

MICHAEL KRUSE in the July/Aug. issue of POLITICO Magazine, "How Gotham Gave Us Trump: Ever wonder how a lifelong urbanite can resent cities as much as Donald Trump does? First you have to understand '70s and '80s New York": "For Trump, as inhospitable as he found the city on the street, the parlors of high society were equally problematic-and he created a refuge. It was some 600 feet in the sky, where the faucets were gold, the baseboards were onyx and the paintings on the ceiling, he would claim, were comparable to the work of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. At the top of Trump Tower, biographer Tim O'Brien told me, he could live 'at a remove from the city and its amazing bloodstream of ideas and people and culture'- 'encased,' added fellow biographer Gwenda Blair, 'within this bubble of serenity and privilege.'" <http://politi.co/2t7O8QT>

FIRST PERSON -- "Present at the Destruction: How Rex Tillerson Is Wrecking the State Department: I worked in Foggy Bottom for 6 years. I've never seen anything like this," by Max Bergmann in POLITICO Magazine: "I recently returned to Foggy Bottom for the first time since January 20 to attend the departure of a former colleague and career midlevel official - something that had sadly become routine. ... As I made the

rounds and spoke with usually buttoned-up career officials, some who I knew well, some who I didn't, from a cross section of offices covering various regions and functions, no one held back. To a person, I heard that the State Department was in 'chaos,' 'a disaster,' 'terrible,' the leadership 'totally incompetent.' ...

"As I walked through the halls once stalked by diplomatic giants like Dean Acheson and James Baker, the deconstruction was literally visible. Furniture from now-closed offices crowded the hallways. Dropping in on one of my old offices, I expected to see a former colleague-a career senior foreign service officer-but was stunned to find out she had been abruptly forced into retirement and had departed the previous week. This office, once bustling, had just one person present, keeping on the lights. This is how diplomacy dies. Not with a bang, but with a whimper. With empty offices on a midweek afternoon." <http://politi.co/2u5GOoD>

VALLEY TALK -- "Twitter is looking for ways to let users flag fake news, offensive content," by WaPo's Elizabeth Dwoskin: "Twitter is exploring adding a feature that would let users flag tweets that contain misleading, false or harmful information, according to two people familiar with the company's projects. The feature, which is still in a prototype phase and may never be released, is part of the company's uphill battle against rampant abuse on its platform. It could look like a tiny tab appearing in a drop-down menu alongside tweets, according to the people." <http://wapo.st/2snAnQU>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Greta Van Susteren out at MSNBC after six months," by Hadas Gold: "MSNBC has parted ways with anchor Greta Van Susteren after just six months on air, as her show failed to live up to the network's ratings expectations. An MSNBC executive said the decision to remove the former Fox News host was purely for business reasons, based on ratings.

"MSNBC and Greta Van Susteren have decided to part ways. Greta is a well-regarded television veteran and one of only a few broadcasters who can say they've hosted shows at all three major cable news networks. We are grateful to her and wish her the best,' MSNBC president Phil Griffin said in a memo to staff on Thursday afternoon. 'Please join me in wishing Greta well as she departs. We have enjoyed having her on our air and we're thankful to her and the show team.'" <http://politi.co/2sW01L0>

-- **@oliverdarcy:** "BuzzFeed is launching an opinion section. @tomgara will be editor. More details in this memo @BuzzFeedBen just sent out to staffers" <http://bit.ly/2tssEAf>

--**JAKE TAPPER** has won the Radio Television Digital News Association's 2017 John F. Hogan Distinguished Service Award, which "recognizes an individual's contributions to the journalism profession and freedom of the press." <http://bit.ly/2twBSw2>

Playbookers

SUNDAY SO FAR -- NBC's "Meet the Press": Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) ... Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) ... Malcolm Gladwell. Panel: Hugh Hewitt, Kasie Hunt, Katty Kay, Eugene Robinson

--CBS' "Face the Nation": Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah). Panel with four authors who've written books about presidents: Peter Baker, John Farrell, Lynne Olson and Sally Mott ... "City of Ghosts" director Matthew Heineman, and Syrian journalist Abdalaziz Alhamza. Political panel: Lanhee Chen, Michael Graham, Ezra Klein and Ruth Marcus

- ABC's "This Week": Ohio Gov. John Kasich

--"Fox News Sunday": John Roberts is subbing for Chris Wallace. Panel: Kim Strassel, Gerald Seib, Marie Harf, Charles Hurt

--CNN's "State of the Union": Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) ... Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.). Panel: Jason Kander, Karine Jean-Pierre, Rep. Marsha Blackburn, Scott Jennings

--CNN's "Inside Politics" with John King: Julie Pace, Perry Bacon, Sara Murray, Phil Mattingly

SPOTTED IN ASPEN at a dinner last night hosted by David Bradley and Comcast: Chris Matthews, Andrea Mitchell, Dafna Linzer, Steve Clemons, Bob Cohn, Evan Osnos

SPOTTED last night at Carol Lee's WSJ going away party at the Trump hotel (she's heading to NBC News): Maureen Dowd, Sean Spicer, Ashley Parker, Philip Rucker, Jon Karl, Jeff Mason, WSJ D.C. bureau chief Paul Beckett, party organizer Julie Mason, Margaret Talev, Peter Nicholas, Julie Davis, Brianna Keilar, Eli Stokols and Josh Dawsey

SPOTTED yesterday at the Nats-Cubs game (the Cubs won 5-4): CLF President Corry Bliss, Team Ryan's Kevin Seifert and Jake Kastan, and Boehner alum Barry Jackson

SPOTTED last night at the National Press Club for a party celebrating Peter Baker's new book "Obama: The Call of History": Susan Glasser, Jeff Ballou, Christi Parsons, Carol Lee, Michael Shear, Betsy Fischer Martin and Jonathan Martin, Julie Hirschfeld Davis, Tony Blinken and Evan Ryan, Isaac Dove, Steve Scully, Alexis Simendinger, Margaret Talev, Nicole Rabner, Heidi Crebo-Rediker, Diana Farrell, Jeff Bieber, Suzanne Struglinski, Lindsay Underwood, Lisa Matthews

OUT AND ABOUT IN NYC -- Fresh from addressing the European Parliament in Brussels (<http://mikebloom.bg/2sjt1Ck>), Mike Bloomberg last night hosted the official launch party for the newly redesigned Bloomberg Businessweek under editor Megan Murphy. ***Pic of Bloomberg, Murphy and John Micklethwait in front of a giant iPhone replica with a live touch screen featuring the magazine's new daily app***

<http://bit.ly/2stcTFa>

--**SPOTTED:** Reto Gregori, Kirsten Powers, Jim Aley, Howard Chua-Eoan, Yvette Vega, Hilary Rosen, Matt Winkler, Tammy Haddad, Juleanna Glover, Richard Haass, Stephanie Ruhle, Laura Zelenko, Iva Zoric, Jason Schechter, Ryan Williams (*pic of him with Bloomberg*: <http://bit.ly/2s8E7kX>), Evelyn Farkas, Jed Sandberg, Al Mayers, Ashley Bahnken, Jason Kelly, Edmund Lee, Jacki Kelley, Keith Grossman, Chitra Wadhvani, Mike Dukmejian, Ty Trippet, Harry West, Robert Vargas, Stu Loeser, Sara Fischer, Christine Taylor, Andrew Benett, Mitchell Moss, Deirdre Quinn, King Chong, Donna Faircloth, Susan Mercandetti, Chris Taylor, Jon Banner, Patty Harris.

TRANSITIONS -- Karen Anderson is leaving Results for America to join the University of Chicago's Becker Friedman Institute for Research in Economics, where she will help UChicago economists with the communication and dissemination of their research.

HILLARY ALUMNI -- Oren Shur, the Clinton campaign's former director of paid media and a DGA alum, has joined SKDKnickerbocker as SVP and political director.
<http://politi.co/2tretMa>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): BerlinRosen's Rob Duffey ... **(was Wednesday):** Leslie Peterson

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: David Frum, senior editor at The Atlantic, is 57. He's celebrating "in the little village of Wellington, Ontario, where my family has been spending summers for almost three decades." How he thinks the Trump presidency is going: "Mostly sinister, sometimes ludicrous." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:
<http://politi.co/2t7ROC7>

BIRTHDAYS: IRS Commissioner John Koskinen is 77 ... Purple Strategies' Kyle Plotkin, former CoS to Bobby Jindal (hat tip: Bobby) ... Alina Selyukh Pickeral, technology reporter at NPR and host of the All Tech Considered blog ... Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) is 6-0 ... Brian Stewart, media relations director at MoveOn.org ... Paul Cheung, director of visual journalism at NBC News digital ... Creative Coalition CEO Robin Bronk (h/t Tammy Haddad) ... Luke Jackson, press secretary for Sen. Jon Tester in Montana, is 26, celebrating by drinking IPA and listening to "Wagon Wheel" (the right version) on repeat (h/t Lauren Passalacqua) ... Luke Carter, director of data science at Y2 Analytics, is 25 (h/t Jack Appelbaum) ... John Legittino, CEO and co-founder of Advoc8, who celebrated last week with friends at U2 (h/ts Josh Sharp, Sara Murray, and Ryan Williams) ... Kara Wheeler, MetLife political affairs manager and an RNC and Hill alum, is 3-0 (h/t boyfriend Jon Adame, filing from Rosemary Beach, Florida) ...

... **Uber's Evangeline George**, a Team Pelosi alum, is 3-0, headed to Palm Beach with friends for the weekend (h/t Tom Manatos) ... Dan Judy, Vice President with North Star Opinion Research in Old Town (h/t John Celock) ... Laura Turanchik ... Bob McBarton ... Josefina Carbonell ... Robyn Shapiro ... Ward Carroll, U.S. Naval Institute's director of outreach ... Emily Sabbath ... Roxanne Conlin ... Alexandra Acker-Lyons, a Democracy

Alliance alum and founder of AL Advising, a philanthropic and political consulting firm ... Dan Leistikow ... Rachael Gorlin ... Kenzie Bok ... Norm Sterzenbach ... Jake Vilsack (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... photographer Gregory Beals ... Will Cappelletti, investment strategist at Chevron and a Don Rumsfeld alum ... Jake Stafford ... Montana Rep. Ellie Boldman-Hill Smith ... Douglas Waller is 68 ... Elizabeth Blackney ... David Alan Grier is 61 ... Mike Tyson is 51 ... Lizzy Caplan is 35 ... Michael Phelps is 32 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD):** A new study estimates that Medicare Part D costs would be 58 percent higher without pharmacy benefit managers' (PBMs') clinical tools and price negotiations with drug manufacturers and pharmacies. The study shows PBMs significantly lower premiums and out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries. In fact, PBMs are projected to save Medicare Part D \$896 billion over the next decade. Thanks to PBMs, Medicare Part D continues to drive savings and value for taxpayers and beneficiaries, ensuring that more than 39 million American seniors can access the prescription drugs they need. Learn more at affordableprescriptiondrugs.org *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pounder
Sent: Fri 5/19/2017 8:27:21 PM
Subject: Monitoring Proposal...
5.19.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.docx

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached a proposal to do media monitoring for the EPA tailored to the Agency's need for a service focused on key stories that develop throughout the day either online, in print, or on TV. Let us know your thoughts. Happy to expand out if needed or discuss further. Thanks again for the consideration.

--

Joe Pounder
jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460



To: Interested Parties
From: Joe Pounder, President, America Rising Corp.
Date: May 19, 2017
Subject: Media Monitoring Services In 2017-2018

Project Scope:

Provide comprehensive media monitoring of news about Administrator Scott Pruitt and specifically about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Media Monitoring:

Definers Public Affairs can provide comprehensive war room-style media monitoring focused on stories about Administrator Pruitt and the Environmental Protection Agency. This monitoring would include print and online sources, national and local TV, and social media. Stories would be compiled into a **daily matrix** about Administrator Pruitt. While not alerting stories throughout the day like in a campaign setting, Definers **will alert major stories as they develop**.

The monitoring will focus on stories about Administrator Pruitt and the EPA and not stories about environmental policy in general. The ultimate goal of the monitoring is to provide your team with a greater understanding of the Administrator's and Agency's coverage throughout the day.

In the next three months, Definers will be rolling out for its monitoring clients a new Console that will make all news clips alerted available via login in addition to email notifications. The Console has a powerful search function that will allow users to easily find the clips they need for ongoing projects.

Timeline:

Definers can begin providing immediate support upon execution of an agreement.

Budget:

To accomplish this level of monitoring support, Definers proposes a retainer of **\$10,000 per month** for a term of one-year.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 2:06:12 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. [Ed Markey](#) is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 - just under three weeks! - but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning [vote](#) on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said - and reiterated Monday - that he'd like to eventually [package](#) Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA [rounded up](#) compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman [John Barrasso](#) echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#) that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " [nonsense](#)."

If you go: The [hearing](#) starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [appears before](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then [heads to](#) a Senate Appropriations

subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on nearly two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction here.

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has proposed to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its Cooperative Federalism 2.0 approach between EPA - which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" - and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy argues in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader - at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at

Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released [an analysis](#) finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. [Dan Kildee](#) holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's

funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a new report today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior launched a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign - entitled "Your Energy" - educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website here (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

- Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. Houston Chronicle.
- Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. API.
- TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. Bismarck Tribune.
- Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. Des Moines Register.
- BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. Reuters.

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/13/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-220805>

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
Cc: Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Mon 11/13/2017 4:25:32 PM
Subject: Re: Interview

I would say no to Business Insider. They have been incredibly critical.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 13, 2017, at 8:17 AM, Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov> wrote:

We also need to bring in the WaPo people sometime before the end of the year.

From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 10:09 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Cc: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Interview

Joe Perticone of Business Insider reached out and wants to interview the Administrator. He covers Congress more generally.

He's a fair reporter and I worked with him a lot when I was at the RNC and he was at IJ Review. BI has a large readership.

From: Joe Perticone [<mailto:jperticone@businessinsider.com>]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Cc: Pamela Engel <pengel@businessinsider.com>; Brett LoGiurato <blogiurato@businessinsider.com>
Subject: Interview

Hey James,

Would love to interview Administrator Pruitt about how the EPA is working now that it's a year into the Trump administration, talking policy specifics and all. I've cc'ed to this email my editors, Brett LoGiurato and Pam Engel too. I hope we can work something out.

Best,

Joe

--

Joe Perticone

Politics Reporter | Business Insider

150 5th Ave, 8th Floor, New York, NY

Mobile: 415.233.2115

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:40:01 PM
Subject: RE: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

Good w me

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]
From: Kevin Bogardus
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:09:02 PM
Subject: Morocco trip and PR firm contract

Hello everyone,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

I'm working on a few pieces today so I have a few questions for you, which are:

■• Sen. Carper has requested that the EPA Inspector General also investigate Administrator Pruitt's trip to Morocco as part of the EPA IG's audit of the administrator's travel, according to a letter sent yesterday (https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/a/7/a7271e2f-169d-4421-8aa1-bd2aee769bb0/357ADF0B861CF8EE2E008EE37D270633.carper-asks-inspector-general-to-expand-investigation-into-epa-administrators-travel.pdf). Does EPA have any reaction to this letter?

■• American Oversight and Environmental Working Group are calling on the EPA IG to investigate an EPA contract awarded to Definers Corp., a public affairs firm, according to a letter sent yesterday (<https://www.americanoversight.org/american-oversight-environmental-working-group-call-epa-ig-investigation-no-bid-contract-gop-consulting-firm#letter>). In addition, Public Citizen has filed a protest at the Government Accountability Office regarding the EPA contract with Definers Corp, according to a letter sent yesterday (https://www.citizen.org/sites/default/files/bid_protest_for_epa_contract_ep18h000025.pdf). Does EPA have any reaction to either of these letters?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News reporter

kbogardus@eenews.net

202-446-0401 (p)

202-247-7844 (c)

202-737-5299 (f)

Follow me [@KevinBogardus](#)

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EnergyWire, ClimateWire, E&E Daily, Greenwire, E&ENews PM

To: Alex Guillen[aguillen@politico.com]; Annie Snider[asnider@politico.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 4/13/2017 2:31:19 PM
Subject: RE: Pruitt on Fox

Of course, will do a better job of flagging this stuff for you faster. I started a month ago.

Yes, I remember sending you great stuff from my previous jobs. Always happy to grab coffee or lunch sometime, would be great to meet you.

From: Alex Guillen [mailto:aguillen@politico.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 10:24 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Annie Snider <asnider@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Pruitt on Fox

Thanks Jahan. I just filed a story on his appearance. If possible in the future, a heads up would be appreciated on his TV/radio appearances — he seems to like to make news and we like to cover it quickly.

When did you start at EPA? Congratulations on the move. I don't think we worked together too much but I remember you from your RNC days and the Rubio campaign.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 10:18 AM
To: Alex Guillen <aguillen@politico.com>; Annie Snider <asnider@politico.com>
Subject: Pruitt on Fox

Alex and Annie –

Just wanted to flag, Administrator Pruitt's interview from Fox and Friends this morning, where he said we can improve the environment and grow jobs.

●□□□□□□□□

http://video.foxnews.com/v/5397108116001/?playlist_id=930909787001#sp=show-clips

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Richard Harris
Sent: Fri 1/19/2018 8:28:32 PM
Subject: Re: Soledad O'Brien interview request

Forgive me, Jahan, for the clumsy wording. I simply meant it's the start of a new year and hope that the CBS interview signals there will be more opportunities for broadcasts like ours to have an opportunity to talk with the Administrator. Our broadcast is syndicated on 137 TV stations in cities throughout the country and we now have the second highest cumed of all the Sunday shows, except for **MEET THE PRESS**.

I didn't intend to convey the Administrator has been inaccessible to the media, simply whether there will be opportunities for programs such as ours to be part of the mix of media outlets.

We broadcast from Florida this week with Republican Rep. Curbelo and Republican Mayor Francis Suarez of Miami. Last week, Soledad interviewed Republican Rep. Hultgren from Illinois.

It's important for our broadcast to have Republicans from the Hill and representatives from the Trump administration. We have tried, with no success so far, in having RNC Chair McDaniel as well.

So thanks for allowing me to clarify.

Here's a link to the show and some of the interviews: <http://matteroffact.tv/>

Best,

Richard

On Fri, Jan 19, 2018 at 3:05 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

What do you mean more access for the media?

We did over 100 interviews last year on Fox News, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, Washington Post, New York Times, Talking Points Memo, Reuters and numerous local outlets as well.

We've also sat down this year with Reuters, Wall Street Journal and CBS.

Please explain your line about media access?

On Jan 19, 2018, at 3:00 PM, Richard Harris <rlharris05@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Jahan,

Now that Administrator Pruitt has done an extensive interview on CBS, I'm hoping it

signals more access for the media.

May I reup our request from the beginning of the year for the Administrator to sit down with Soledad?

Our next tapings are on January 25 and 31st. When we schedule the interview, would you need Soledad to come to the EPA or would he be able to come to the Newseum?

Best,

Richard

On Tue, Jan 2, 2018 at 9:45 AM, Richard Harris <rlharris05@gmail.com> wrote:

Any particular reason? Scheduling?

On Tue, Jan 2, 2018 at 9:40 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We will be unable to accommodate this request.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Richard Harris [<mailto:rlharris05@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 9:37 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Soledad O'Brien interview request

Happy New Year. A followup to the Dec. 19 email:

Ernesta mentioned this was the appropriate address to send a request for an interview with the Administrator,

The notion is to not do a broad one-year anniversary segment, but to focus in on one area of the Trump Administration where real change is underway.

We will be originating the broadcast (the currently airs on 136 TV stations, mostly on Sunday morning) from Florida during the week of January 15, which includes the anniversary of the Inauguration of President Trump.

So our thought is to have Soledad sit down with Administrator Pruitt on **Thursday, January 11 or another convenient time**, an interview that would air on the weekend of January 13-14. We are now one of the top Sunday political affairs broadcasts, reaching 1.5 million viewers each week. It should take no more than 15 minutes.

Please call with any questions.

I'm at 202.457.0220 and cell 301.704.6255.

Many thanks,

Richard

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Richard Harris** <rlharris05@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Dec 19, 2017 at 11:59 AM
Subject: Soledad O'Brien interview request
To: press@epa.gov

As we look ahead to the one-year anniversary of the Trump Administration, Soledad O'Brien, host of the weekly syndicated television newsmagazine ***MATTER OF FACT***, would like to sit down with Administrator Pruitt. Who is the best EPA press officer to field this request?

Can you send along the appropriate email and phone? It was unclear at the epa.gov website where to send requests for an interview with the Administrator.

Best,

Richard Harris

Consulting Editorial Producer

MATTER OF FACT

202.457.0220

301.705.6255 (cell)

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/8/2017 9:27:57 PM
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...
[5.22.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.pdf](#)

From: Joe Pounder [mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Jason Abbruzzese[jason@mashable.com]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov];
Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:51:36 PM
Subject: RE: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Jason Abbruzzese [mailto:jason@mashable.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:49 AM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

Greetings,

Jason Abbruzzese from Mashable here. I'm following up on the Mother Jones report that the EPA has been contracting Definers Public Affairs.

I'd love to know what kind of worker Definers has been doing for the EPA. Think someone could fill me in?

Cheers,

Jason

--

Jason Abbruzzese

News Editor

617 697 3390 (Cell, please text first)

Mashable

@JasonAbbruzzese

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Tue 10/10/2017 9:44:25 AM
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by ExxonMobil: Clean Power Plan reversal comes today — Perry reveals non-commercial travel — Barrasso faces primary challenger?

By Anthony Adragna | 10/10/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén and Darius Dixon

CLEAN POWER PLAN WALKBACK ARRIVES: From the heart of coal country in Hazard, Ky. and alongside Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced Monday he'd sign a proposed rule today formally kicking off what's expected to be a protracted, years-long regulatory and legal process of withdrawing the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. "The past administration was unapologetic, they were using every bit of power, authority to use the EPA to pick winners and losers on how we pick electricity in this country. That is wrong," Pruitt told the crowd.

POLITICO's Emily Holden and Andrew Restuccia [got the talking points](#) ahead of the announcement, which show President Donald Trump's administration will frame the regulation's repeal as "another step advancing the president's America First strategy." It's worth noting the country is more than halfway toward meeting the rule's goals even though it never formally took effect. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman vowed to sue over that action Monday.

Long haul ahead: It'll take a ton of time to actually formally remove the Clean Power Plan from the books and to defend those actions in court, Emily [reports](#). So environmentalists and Obama-era EPA leaders say Pruitt seems to be setting himself up to never actually issue a replacement rule limiting carbon emissions from power plants. "Scott Pruitt's politics really does militate against him signing a regulation on greenhouse gas emissions," said Joe Goffman, the lead attorney at EPA when it filed the rule in 2015. But even without the rule, many companies and states are moving away from coal, opting for cheaper natural gas or renewable power.

Farmers count more: Pruitt didn't seem too concerned Monday that his schedule includes few meetings with environmental groups. [Speaking](#) at a Kentucky Farm Bureau Monday afternoon, Pruitt said he was asked by reporters earlier about the lack of meetings. "Well, what about those farmers and ranchers in Iowa? What about those farmers and ranchers in North Dakota and Kentucky?" he asked. "Then I sat down and I listened to them about issues that impact them. Do they not count? And the answer is, you count more. Because every single day, what we do impacts you and we have to work together to achieve better outcomes for water and air quality in this country."

Gina McCarthy's thoughts? The former EPA administrator who authored the regulation: "They're using stall tactics to defer action, ignoring the courts and the demands of the American people ... They're adding more pollution into our air and threatening public health at a time when the threats of climate change are growing and the costs are growing immeasurably higher on our children and their future."

Somebody tell Rick Perry: Pruitt blasted the Obama administration, saying "regulatory power should not be used by any regulatory body to pick winners and losers." Not sure where he might come down on the latest move by Energy Secretary Rick Perry, who has asked FERC to write rules to prop up the struggling coal and nuclear sectors.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and I hope everyone had a wonderful Columbus Day holiday! Senate Energy's Patrick McCormick (a fellow alumnus) identified Susan Collins as the first U.S. Senate Youth Program graduate subsequently elected to the Senate. For today: Who's the most recent physician elected to the Senate? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

PERRY RELEASES DEETS ON NON-COMMERCIAL TRAVEL: Joining the ranks of Trump officials utilizing non-commercial travel arrangements while in office, Perry announced Friday he'd spent as much as \$56,246 during four trips on government-owned or chartered aircraft, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. In a letter to House Oversight and Government Reform Committee leaders, the former Texas governor detailed the trips:

— A mid-May one-day round trip from Reagan to Olathe, Kan. for DOE's Small Business Forum & Expo that cost an estimated \$35,000,

— A private charter flight on Sept. 28 (one day before HHS Secretary Tom Price resigned after a series of POLITICO reports on his lavish private plane usage) from Dulles to Hazleton Regional Airport in Pennsylvania that later continued to the Greater Portsmouth Regional Airport in Ohio at a cost of an estimated \$11,000,

— Use of a DOD plane in May to travel from Idaho Falls, Idaho to Santa Fe, N.M. at an estimated cost of \$7,000, and,

— Use of a Bonneville Power Administration plane in August to fly from Seattle to Richland, Wash., to visit the Hanford nuclear site, which cost an estimated \$3,246

DOE spokesperson Shaylyn Hynes said in a statement. "The Secretary travels almost exclusively on commercial aircraft. In the rare instances where government-owned or chartered aircraft have been used, trips were pre-approved by an Ethics officer within the Office of General Counsel."

Speaking of questionable travel, EPA's inspector general confirmed Friday it had expanded a prior investigation to include all of Pruitt's travel, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The watchdog has faced pressure to look into whether Pruitt's non-commercial flights were necessary and appropriate expenses as it's already looking into whether the former Oklahoma attorney general's frequent trips back to his home state were appropriate.

New probe sought: Meanwhile, the Campaign Legal Center has asked DOJ's Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's appearance at a political fundraiser in the U.S. Virgin Islands while on an official trip ran afoul of the federal law

prohibiting federal officials from using government resources to engage in partisan political activity, Pro's Nick Juliano, Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon [report](#). "This activity constitutes impermissible solicitation of political contributions if event organizers conditioned the opportunity to take a photograph with Secretary Zinke on paying a higher fee," Walter Shaub, the Campaign Legal Center's senior director for ethics, [wrote](#), citing POLITICO's [reporting](#).

Meanwhile, CNN is reporting that Obama's Interior secretaries had spent \$971,000 on non-commercial air travel over seven years. Read it [here](#).

DISASTER FUNDING FIGHT ON TAP: The House is expected this week to consider a massive \$29 billion disaster funding relief package to provide aid to Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico in the aftermath of four consecutive blows from hurricanes. That comes as Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló [asked](#) Congress to provide an additional \$4 billion from various federal programs and agencies to meet the island's "immediate emergency needs."

Congressional delegation vows support: A bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers toured the devastated territory over the weekend and vowed long-term support to rebuild the island. Multiple lawmakers, including Sens. [Cory Gardner](#) and [Ron Johnson](#), said reconnecting the island's electric grid was their top priority. "If you're a utility CEO and you're listening to this right now, I hope you will contact the Puerto Rico power authority," Gardner said, according to [McClatchy](#). "Come into Puerto Rico. Contact them. Let's make sure we get this grid built."

Vice President Mike Pence visited the island on Friday and said the Trump administration would be there for the long haul ahead. "The people of Puerto Rico can be assured that we will be with you every step of the way," he said. "We will see this challenge through." The most recent [government figures](#) show 59.5 percent of residents now have potable drinking water and 15 percent of people have electricity.

Feud with mayor goes on: FEMA Administrator Brock Long dismissed the criticism of the federal government's response by San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz as "political noise" during a Sunday interview on ABC's "This Week." That comes after Cruz [tweeted](#) Sunday "Increasingly painful to understand [sic] the american people want to help and US Gov does not want to help. WE NEED WATER!" She had previously called Trump's remarks during a visit to the island "insulting."

Florida seeks more hurricane relief funding: All of Florida's congressional delegation (except for Rep. [Daniel Webster](#)) signed [a letter](#) Friday seeking nearly an additional \$27 billion in disaster relief as the state recovers from Hurricane Irma.

BARRASSO GETTING A CHALLENGER? Erik Prince, the founder of the security contractor Blackwater, is taking a hard look at challenging Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman [John Barrasso](#) for the Republican Senate nomination in deep red Wyoming, the [New York Times](#) and Associated Press [report](#). The brother of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Prince, wouldn't challenge Barrasso's conservative bona fides, but would instead go after his close ties to McConnell. Steve Bannon is leading the charge for Prince to run despite his scant ties to Wyoming (he had a residence in Wapiti, Wyo. in the late 1990s and early 2000s).

**** Presented by ExxonMobil:** We're collaborating with FuelCell Energy on a novel idea to use fuel cells to capture carbon at natural gas power plants, and in the process reduce emissions and increase electrical output. This technology could be a game changer in addressing the world's growing need for energy, while also reducing the impact on the environment. [Learn more.](#) **

JONES ACT WAIVER LAPSES: The Trump administration declined to renew a Jones Act waiver allowing foreign vessels to load ships at domestic ports for delivery to Puerto Rico, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). "We believe that extending the waiver is unnecessary to support the humanitarian relief efforts on the island," DHS spokesman David Lapan said. "There is an ample supply of Jones Act-qualified vessels to ensure that cargo is able to reach Puerto Rico." Ships previously loaded at U.S. ports now have until Oct. 18 to deliver their cargos.

BONN MOVE: Quashing rumors that Pruitt might lead the U.S. delegation to the major international climate change summit in Bonn, Germany next month, the Trump administration has picked the State Department's Thomas Shannon to head up the U.S. delegation, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia [reports](#). The appointment of Shannon, undersecretary for political affairs at State, comes as the administration has declined to appoint a climate envoy, who would normally lead the trip.

MOVING ON ANTIQUITIES ACT REFORM: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) released legislation [H.R. 3990 \(115\)](#) Monday revamping the Antiquities Act ahead of a Wednesday markup of the bill. "This legislation provides for accountability in the Act's uses," he said in a statement. "It modernizes the law to restore its intent, allowing for the protection of actual antiquities without disenfranchisement of local voices and perspectives. It standardizes and limits the president's power to reshape monuments. "

MAIL CALL! CONSERVATIVES URGE TRUMP TO IMPLEMENT RFS REFORMS: A group of conservative organizations are out with [a letter](#) today urging Trump to revamp the Renewable Fuel Standard by moving its point of obligation, which they describe as a "mandate [that] hinders economic growth and stifles innovation" particularly among smaller companies. "Moving the 'point of obligation' would level the playing field between large oil companies and independent refiners as well as reduce the unfair advantage that the mandate gives large gas station chains over small mom-and-pop gas stations," wrote the groups, including Tea Party Nation and Institute for Liberty. Of course, shifting that obligation to comply with the program had been a major goal of Carl Icahn, the Trump adviser and refinery owner who resigned his unpaid White House position in August amid concerns he was using his influence to help one of his companies.

Lawmakers write letter of their own: Pennsylvania Sens. [Bob Casey](#) and [Pat Toomey](#), as well as 12 House members, sent [a letter](#) Trump urging him to revamp the RIN credit program which they said is "undermining the continued viability" of Northeast oil refiners. "We are concerned that current compliance costs and the volatile RIN market may lead to the closure of one or more these merchant refineries, which would have a devastating impact on the regional economy," they wrote.

WOTUS WATCH AT SCOTUS: Supreme Court justices hear arguments Wednesday on the relatively simple but ultimately important, question of which court should hear arguments over the waters of the U.S. regulation (and a forthcoming replacement), Pro's Alex Guillén reports in [Energy Regulation Watch](#). At issue is whether Clean Water Act cases like this should start at the district courts or, like many Clean Air Act challenges, skip that step and go to the federal appeals court level.

WALK, DON'T RUN: 134 of the the nation's mayors are launching a push today to ensure their citizens live within a 10-minute walk from a park or public green space. "I am proud we're supporting the goal of a 10-minute walk to a quality park for all," New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said in a statement.

FERC ASKS COURT FOR LIMITED REHEARING ON STUDY: FERC [appealed](#) a federal court decision that directed the agency to amend an environmental study for the Southeast Market Pipelines Project to include an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the power plants that may use the fuel. On Friday afternoon, regulators said they plan to comply with the [Aug. 22 ruling](#) but asked that the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals provide the agency with more time to address the order as well as reconsider their decision to vacate FERC's certificate approving the project.

"Vacatur would revoke the certificates of public convenience and necessity for these pipelines - pipelines that are currently providing natural gas to power plants in Florida," FERC attorneys wrote in their rehearing request. "Without such certificates, the pipelines would have to cease operating, at least temporarily. That outcome risks significant disruption to natural gas and electricity service to Florida consumers." FERC issued a [5-page](#) draft supplemental environmental impact statement on Sept. 27 to start compliance with the court order, and has asked for comments through Nov. 20. The court could respond in the next few weeks.

ARNOLD'S LIFE AFTER POLITICS: POLITICO's Edward-Isaac Dove [takes a look](#) at what Arnold Schwarzenegger's been up to in the six years since the Republican terminator left the California governor's mansion and gets this quote on climate change efforts that seems like it could have come from Gov. Jerry Brown. "If the federal government, Republicans and Democrats, and Donald Trump and his whole White House would be smart, they would just copy exactly what we are doing in California," he said.

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST: One of Texas' largest coal-fired power plants will permanently close Jan. 4, 2018, the Houston Chronicle [reports](#). Vistra Energy's 1,800 megawatt Monticello power plant will lay off approximately 200 employees with the closure. "This was a difficult decision made after a year of careful analysis," CEO Curt Morgan said.

STAFFING UP: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke formally announced six hires on Friday: Jason Larrabee as principal deputy assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks; Austin Ewell as deputy assistant secretary for Water and Science; Brian Steed as deputy director of BLM; Cally Younger as counselor to BLM; Kathleen Benedetto as senior adviser to BLM and Benjamin Cassidy as senior deputy director for Intergovernmental and External Affairs.

SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS: EPA's inspector general has launched 70 investigations into a surge of threats against agency employees this year, NBC Washington [reports](#). Patrick Sullivan assistant inspector general for investigations, told the local news station: "I do feel we've prevented acts of violence through our investigations. I feel very confident we have." There's been a rise in threats against Pruitt, the report says.

But the one that caught ME's eyes was one that targeted McCarthy. In that case, former EPA employee Barbara Jordan wrote an email that she was outside a hotel and that "i am going to murder those (expletive).... and i hope they drop dead like flies." Jordan has pleaded not guilty.

MOVERS, SHAKERS: Two former George W. Bush administration Interior veterans have been named to lead Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck's energy practice. Jon Hrobsky worked in the Office of the Secretary and was also deputy director for policy and planning of the U.S Minerals Management Service. Luke Johnson was former chief of staff for BLM.

QUICK HITS

- Review of Dakota Access Pipeline to Extend into Spring. [AP](#).
- After Irma, Rubio Vows To Rebuild Everglades National Park 'Stronger Than Ever.' [CBS Miami](#).
- Oil prices stable after OPEC signals possible further action. [Reuters](#).
- Ex-Grassley aide helps his firm makes millions on tax deduction he shepherded in Congress. [Des Moines Register](#).
- Hurricane Nate shuts down about 90% of Gulf of Mexico oil production. [CNBC](#).
- Tony Abbott says climate change is 'probably doing good'. [The Guardian](#).
- In New Rule, Trump EPA Allows Texas Coal Plants to Pollute Even More Than They Already Do. [Texas Observer](#).

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

TUESDAY

9:55 a.m. — NRECA hosts a cybersecurity forum, "Insights on Cybersecurity for Electric Utilities," 4301 Wilson Boulevard, First Floor, Arlington, VA 22203

12:30 p.m. — "[Greening Governance Seminar Series: Open Government for Climate Action](#)," World Resources Institute, 10 G Street NE, Suite 800

3:30 p.m. — "[Party Talks, Trade Dialogue, and the Role of Energy Exports](#)," Atlantic Council, 12th Floor, 1030 15th St. NW

5:00 p.m. — House Rules Committee holds hearing on Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, H-313

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee holds hearing on several bills, Longworth 1334

2:00 p.m. — House Natural Resources Committee's Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee holds a hearing on ASTRO Act, Longworth 1334

THURSDAY

8:00 a.m. — Canadian Embassy hosts the 28th annual Energy Efficiency Forum, Canadian Embassy, 501 Pennsylvania Ave NW

9:30 a.m. — "IEA's Renewable Energy Market Report 2017," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

10:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee holds a legislative hearing on several bills, Longworth 1334

10:00 a.m. — House Energy and Commerce holds hearing with DOE Secretary Rick Perry, Rayburn 2123

FRIDAY

9:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee holds hearing on onshore energy policy discussion draft, Longworth 1334

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To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/10/clean-power-plan-reversal-comes-today-024964>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Trump's climate rule rollback will focus on 'America First' talking points [Back](#)

By Emily Holden and Andrew Restuccia | 10/07/2017 05:32 PM EDT

The Trump administration plans to highlight its "America First" strategy when unveiling a proposal to roll back the biggest part of former President Barack Obama's climate legacy next week, according to talking points obtained by POLITICO.

An administration official said the final announcement to withdraw the Clean Power Plan — a rule to limit greenhouse gas emissions from coal plants — would probably be made by EPA, not the White House, making the prospect of a Rose Garden speech from the President Donald Trump unlikely.

The official said it's unclear whether EPA will hold an event to make a formal announcement, though multiple sources tracking the issue expect the agency to release its plans on Tuesday.

EPA did not immediately respond to request for comment.

"Repealing the Clean Power Plan is another step advancing the president's America First strategy," guidance from the administration said. The rule was the focal point of the Obama administration's plans to meet its international pledges to curb the carbon emissions that cause climate change.

The lack of a Rose Garden ceremony would give the rule's withdrawal less drama than Trump's June speech outside the White House in which he announced he was exiting the Paris climate agreement — an action he said he took for the "citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." Both Trump and EPA administrator Scott Pruitt have discounted man-made climate change, with Trump dismissing it as a "hoax" and Pruitt questioning carbon dioxide's role.

EPA and the White House will say the regulation was "premised on a novel and expansive view of agency authority." It will also emphasize that the Supreme Court stayed implementation of the rule while a lower court reviewed challenges to the regulation — a stay the administration will describe as "unprecedented and historic," according to a brief summary.

The talking points say the rule "ignored states' concerns and eroded longstanding and important partnerships that are a necessary part of achieving positive environmental outcomes."

Obama's EPA officials have said they talked frequently with states before, during and after finishing the rule.

The Clean Power Plan called on states to write their own plans to reduce carbon levels, by using less coal power, ramping up natural gas and renewable energy use, and limiting power demand by making electricity systems and consumer use more efficient. States also could have grouped together to form trading systems, and coal-heavy states could have purchased allowances from greener states to keep some of their plants online. The U.S. is already more than halfway to meeting the Clean Power Plan's goals, although the rule never took effect.

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Pruitt will take first step to repeal Clean Power Plan but could slow-walk replacement [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 10/06/2017 06:20 PM EDT

EPA chief Scott Pruitt is finally making his first move to rescind Barack Obama's marquee climate change rule — but he may not be done by the time President Donald Trump leaves office.

The agency is preparing to publish a proposal to eliminate the Clean Power Plan and may consider replacing it but will not outline options immediately, according to a [draft](#) obtained by POLITICO on Friday. Given the amount of time and effort it will take just to get the current rule off the books — and then to defend that move in court — environmentalists and Obama-era EPA leaders say Pruitt appears to be setting himself up to never have to issue a replacement rule limiting carbon emissions from power plants.

"They're not committing to doing anything at all," said Sean Donahue, an attorney representing environmental groups that support the Clean Power Plan. "This is not a kind of, 'We have a better way to do it.' This is a, 'We really don't want to do it.'"

Pruitt's moves leave federal climate action facing years in limbo as the world experiences warming that is already threatening the environment and public health, with heat waves, drought, sea-level rise and flooding. The Clean Power Plan was the linchpin of U.S. efforts to reduce emissions that cause those problems under an international deal to slow climate change, which Trump has said the country will exit. Even if Pruitt does eventually issue a new rule, he is expected to tailor it so narrowly that it would not lead to any significant carbon reductions.

Joe Goffman, the lead attorney at EPA when it filed the rule in 2015, said it is clear Pruitt's strategy is to slow-walk any action to replace the rule, delaying any of the regulations to curb carbon emissions that the Supreme Court called for a decade ago.

"Scott Pruitt's politics really does militate against him signing a regulation on greenhouse gas emissions," he said.

Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who sued the federal government more than a dozen times, including over the Clean Power Plan, has said he wants to lead public debates on the merits of science linking human activity to the Earth's rapid warming. Critics speculate he is [prepping](#) for a future campaign for Congress or a state-wide office.

EPA has a legal obligation to regulate carbon from power plants, following a 2007 Supreme Court decision and the agency's own declaration that heat-trapping gases endanger public health by causing climate change. But environmental groups can't sue until Pruitt officially withdraws

the rule and again if he publishes a replacement. It will be years before the courts settle the issue.

Fossil-fuel trade groups on Friday lauded the proposal. Paul Bailey, president of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, said the regulation would have increased energy prices while reducing global temperatures a fraction of a degree.

"We are pleased to see EPA repeal this very bad rule," he said.

National Mining Association CEO Hal Quinn said the Clean Power Plan was "an unlawful attempt to transform the nation's power grid." Nixing it would save coal jobs, he argued.

Green groups still must weigh their options, but Donahue indicated they may try one final push to get the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to issue its ruling on the Clean Power Plan, which would cement an answer to the legal issues EPA is raising in its repeal effort.

The new draft discounts most of the value that the Obama administration had estimated would come from reducing carbon emissions and air pollutants that cause health problems. It uses the term "climate change" only once.

"That's the problem with this and other things that these guys are doing, is that they do not acknowledge the fundamental health and environmental threats they're charged with protecting people from," Donahue said. "Their whole thing is about rewarding a subset of industry who are their bankrollers."

The Clean Power Plan would have shifted the U.S. away from coal power and toward lower-carbon natural gas and emissions-free renewable power. It still would have secured only a fraction of the emissions cuts the U.S. would need to achieve to comply with its pledge under the Paris climate agreement.

Power-sector emissions are about a third of the country's carbon pollution, and the Clean Power plan aimed to cut them about 15 percent below 2015 levels. Even without the rule, many companies and states are moving away from coal, opting for cheaper natural gas or renewable power.

Goffman said he's optimistic that Trump's moves won't torpedo a global movement away from fossil fuels because countries have already invested political capital in choosing their commitments.

Jeff Holmstead, an EPA deputy under the George W. Bush administration who now represents groups suing against the Clean Power Plan, believes Pruitt will write a replacement rule focused only on coal plants. Holmstead thinks that move will make it hard for a future administration to write different power-sector climate rules.

"The big picture is that if EPA actually does what it's supposed to do under the Clean Air Act, it will push the issue back to Congress," Holmstead said.

EPA's proposal sets the tone for how Pruitt will express his opinions about climate change in regulatory actions.

Joanne Spalding, a climate attorney at the Sierra Club, said the draft shows that "it's completely irrelevant to this administration the harm that these power plants are doing by spewing out all this carbon pollution, and they don't even talk about it."

A replacement rule would be more of a defensive legal maneuver, meant to protect against judges who might require EPA to move forward after federal climate action has languished for more than a decade. A new regulation would probably call on coal plants to run slightly more efficiently, according to arguments EPA laid out in its draft.

"It's basically saying that these dinosaur coal plants that were built in the '60s and '70s decades ago get to operate forever — even though there are all sorts of clean power sources out there that we could be using that are not destroying our health and the planet," Spalding said.

Alex Guillén contributed to this report.

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DOE's Perry pushes FERC to support coal power plants [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 09/29/2017 02:48 PM EDT

The Trump administration on Friday called on FERC to create new rules to protect coal-fired and nuclear power plants that are being squeezed by cheaper natural gas and renewable sources, saying they were "indispensable for economic and national security."

Energy Secretary Rick Perry, who [told miners](#) in Pennsylvania on Thursday that "it's time for coal in this country to be revived," pressed electricity regulators to alter power markets and protect the resilience of the power grid with payments to generators that keep fuel supplies on site, a clear reference to the coal-fired and nuclear power plants.

The proposal, which DOE said gave FERC 60 days to create a final or interim rule, comes just a month after Perry's agency issued a report saying FERC should "expedite" its work with grid operators to ensure the stability of the nation's power network.

"In terms of process, this is a pretty bold move," said Tony Clark, a Republican former FERC commissioner. DOE often conducts studies on issues it believes need attention, he said, but "actually forwarding to the commission something specific for action is a pretty bold way of moving the issue right up the batting order at FERC."

The new proposal, directed at FERC under a rarely used Section 403 authority of the Department

of Energy Organization Act, stops short of specifically seeking market incentives for coal. But it calls for full-cost recovery for power generating units that provide essential power and "ancillary" services — and have a 90-day fuel supply on site in case of natural or man-made disruptions. That would exclude most natural gas power plants, which do not typically keep large fuel inventories on hand and instead receive supplies via pipeline.

Perry's request represents a departure from the two decades of U.S. policy that has trended toward more market-based tools, which has helped natural gas to nearly double its power market share. Renewable energy sources like wind and solar, though still modest when compared to fossil fuels or nuclear power, have also grown quickly as federal incentives helped drive down their costs.

But the growth of renewables and natural gas — combined with tighter pollution controls and weak new demand for electricity — has forced hundreds of old coal-fired power plants into retirement. Nuclear power plants in some parts of the country are also under financial pressure, hurt by negative wholesale power market prices that sometimes require the plant owners to pay to deliver their power supplies.

"If this gets the debate started, then my hat's off," said former FERC Chairman Pat Wood, a friend of Perry and a strong advocate for market-based power systems. "But it's a pretty arresting [thing] to wake up and read. That would never have played in Texas. ... If there is a service to be valued, then a market can value that."

In the grid study ordered by Perry and released in August, DOE experts pointed to low power prices and cheap natural gas as the single biggest reason for coal ceding its position as the nation's biggest source of electricity. And that report also called for "reforms" to power markets that would help bolster the electricity network's resilience by easing the financial pressures on many power providers.

In its Friday proposal, DOE cited a spike in demand during the 2014 "polar vortex" that hit much of the U.S., which prompted utilities to run many coal plants that were slated for retirement. Without those plants, as many as 65 million people in the PJM market would have seen their power resources threatened, DOE said.

But the new regulatory pitch from the agency also fueled the growing feud between the gas and coal industries.

Paul Bailey, president and CEO American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, commended Perry for "initiating a rulemaking by FERC that will finally value the on-site fuel security provided by the coal fleet."

But the American Petroleum Institute, which also represents natural gas producers, said DOE drew the wrong conclusions from the 2014 event, and that forcing new mandates on the power market wasn't the solution.

"[A]s we review the proposal we are concerned the agency has mischaracterized the lessons

learned from past weather-related events and appears to suggest that additional regulation is the answer where markets have already proven the ability to greatly benefit consumers and give our electric system the flexibility needed to meet constantly, and often rapidly, changing electricity demands," said API Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer Marty Durbin in a statement.

FERC, which has struggled to integrate states' energy policies that aim to boost renewables or support aging nuclear power plants, has long maintained a fuel-neutral stance in the regional markets that it oversees. If it were to follow Perry's directive to create incentives for grid resilience to plants that maintain their own fuel inventories on site, it would be an implicit move at the national level to alter the electricity markets to support the fuels that both Perry and Trump have touted.

Montana regulator Travis Kavulla suggested on Twitter that rather than deal with the pressing issues facing the grid, "Instead, this reform is sort of the @ENERGY equivalent of the Oprah "you get a car, and you get a car. And you? A car!" approach."

However, FERC, whose members are appointed by the president and operate as an independent body, isn't obligated to implement the specific policy pushed by Perry. The commission will so be back to operating with a full five members in the coming weeks, with a Republican majority.

"FERC's going to follow its own procedures," said Marc Spitzer, a Republican former FERC commissioner. "It would be a mistake for people to assume that this is going to be some partisan Republican rubber stamp given the way FERC works."

FERC can spend months or years digging into complex issues that underpin the power markets, and its commissioners tend to seek common ground with each other to ensure that its rules are clear and ensure long-lasting regulations that give utilities stability to plan their operations.

"Is someone really going to invest [billions of dollars] when it's a 3-2 vote that partisans and the parties can flip next year? Is that a good forum for investment as opposed to a 5-0 order?" Spitzer said.

FERC declined to say when the agency last received a rulemaking from DOE using Section 403.

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Energy Department discloses \$56K in Perry travel [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 10/06/2017 07:06 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry has racked up as much as \$56,246 in non-commercial air travel since taking office in early March, the Energy Department disclosed Friday in response to

congressional questions about Cabinet-level trips.

Political appointees at DOE did not use private non-commercial aircraft, but on four occasions Perry did fly on government-owned aircraft or chartered aircraft, DOE Deputy General Counsel Eric Fygi wrote in a letter to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. That committee is seeking information about Trump administration officials' travel following the revelations that led to Tom Price's resignation from the job as HHS secretary.

Perry's single biggest expense, according to agency documents submitted to the committee, was a one-day round trip in mid-May from Reagan National Airport near Washington D.C. to Olathe, Kan. for DOE's Small Business Forum & Expo, and included a tour of the DOE Kansas City National Security Campus, which is responsible for manufacturing and procuring non-nuclear components for nuclear weapons.

Joining Perry on that trip were a handful of other agency officials, including National Nuclear Security Administrator Frank Klotz and deputy chief of staff Dan Wilmot. The total cost to taxpayers for using the Federal Aviation Administration's Gulfstream IV plane was an estimated \$35,000.

Perry's second most expensive trip was a private charter flight on Sept. 28 from the Washington Dulles Airport to the Hazleton Regional Airport in Pennsylvania, which later continued to the Greater Portsmouth Regional Airport in Ohio, and was disclosed by a Reuters report earlier this week. The trip, costing an estimated \$11,000, occurred just a day before Price resigned after a series of POLITICO reports of him running up a government travel tab exceeding \$1 million — a figure that dwarfs Perry's apparent billing.

After visiting the coal mine in Pennsylvania and a defunct uranium enrichment facility in Ohio, the DOE documents say Perry planned to "secure commercial transportation for the continuation of his travel out of Ohio."

Perry and his staff also made use of a Defense Department plane in May for travel from Idaho Falls, Idaho, to tour the national lab there, to Santa Fe, N.M., to visit the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The trip continued from Santa Fe to Carlsbad, N.M., to visit the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a low-level nuclear waste storage facility. The estimated cost of the trip was \$7,000.

The last trip documented by DOE was for the round-trip use of plane owned by the Bonneville Power Administration, a quasi-independent utility within DOE, to fly from Seattle to Richland, Wash., to visit the Hanford nuclear site in August. The cost of the trip: \$3,246.

The information sent to Capitol Hill did not include trips senior DOE non-career officials took with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence on government-owned aircraft or trips with officials at other agencies with their own aircraft, such as DoD and DHS.

"This response does not address this travel as such travel arrangements were not made by DOE," Fygi wrote.

"The Department of Energy strictly follows both government-wide and internal DOE travel regulations and policy," DOE spokesperson Shaylyn Hynes said in a statement. "The Secretary travels almost exclusively on commercial aircraft. In the rare instances where government-owned or chartered aircraft have been used, trips were pre-approved by an Ethics officer within the Office of General Counsel."

The White House has backed steep spending cuts across the executive branch, including a roughly 9 percent to DOE for fiscal 2018, a decline of roughly \$2.7 billion compared to current levels.

In the wake of Price's resignation, several other Cabinet-level Trump officials have found their taxpayer spending scrutinized.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has flown on military planes for some trips that also coincided with appearances at fundraising events, raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism, POLITICO has [reported](#). The EPA Inspector General has also recently [expanded a probe](#) into EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's travels.

An [investigation](#) into seven military flights taken by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin that cost about \$811,798 ultimately found that the former Goldman Sachs alum had not violated any ethics requirements or other regulations.

The White House began cracking down on Cabinet officials' use of private planes amid Price's resignation, telling them chief of staff John Kelly must approve almost all travel on "government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft."

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Price resigns from HHS after facing fire for travel [Back](#)

By Dan Diamond, Rachana Pradhan and Adriel Bettelheim | 09/29/2017 04:40 PM EDT

HHS Secretary Tom Price resigned Friday in the face of multiple federal inquiries and growing criticism of his use of private and government planes for travel, at a cost to taxpayers of more than \$1 million since May.

The White House said the former seven-term Georgia congressman, 63, offered his resignation earlier in the day and that President Donald Trump had accepted it.

Price becomes the first Trump administration Cabinet secretary to step down. The White House said Trump asked Deputy Assistant Health Secretary Don Wright to serve as acting secretary of the agency, which has an annual budget \$1.15 trillion and includes the Medicare and Medicaid programs, as well as the FDA, NIH and CDC.

As late as Thursday, Price said he believed he had the president's support. But the tumult surrounding his travel became another distraction for an administration already reeling from the defeat of repeated Senate efforts to repeal Obamacare and criticism for its hurricane relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

Price ran afoul of Trump in part because his actions seemed to symbolize everything the president had inveighed against on the campaign trail by vowing to "drain the swamp." The fallout extended to the entire Cabinet Friday night when the White House announced that chief of staff John Kelly must approve almost all travel on "government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft."

Price, in his resignation letter, expressed regret that "recent events" distracted from efforts to overhaul the health care system. "In order for you to move forward without further disruption, I am officially tendering my resignation as the Secretary of Health and Human Services effective 11:59 PM on Friday," he wrote.

Senate Democrats quickly served notice they were preparing for a potential confirmation fight over Price's successor, saying the next HHS secretary must not undermine Obamacare. Under Price, the department cut the law's enrollment period in half and slashed advertising and outreach for the enrollment period starting in November.

"The next HHS secretary must follow the law when it comes to the Affordable Care Act instead of trying to sabotage it," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

"Tom Price's replacement needs to be focused on implementing the law as written by Congress and keeping the president's promise to bring down the high cost of prescription drugs," Senate Finance ranking Democrat Ron Wyden of Oregon said in a statement.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, a close ally, praised Price as a dedicated public servant. "His vision and hard work were vital to the House's success passing our health care legislation," Ryan said in a statement.

POLITICO revealed that Price flew at least 26 times on private aircraft at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, a sharp break with his predecessors' practice. Many of Price's flights were between major cities that offered inexpensive alternatives on commercial airlines, including Nashville, Philadelphia and San Diego.

On some of those trips, Price, an orthopedic surgeon, mixed official business with leisure. He took a government-funded private jet in August to get to St. Simons Island, an exclusive Georgia resort where he and his wife own land, a day and a half before he addressed a medical conference he and his wife have long attended. In June, HHS chartered a private jet to fly Price to Nashville, where he owns a condominium and where his son resides. Price toured a medicine dispensary, spoke to a local health summit organized by a friend and had lunch with his son, an HHS official confirmed.

Price also used military aircraft for multi-national trips to Africa, Europe and Asia, at a cost of more than \$500,000 to taxpayers. The White House said it had approved those trips but not the private jets within the United States.

Price tried to defuse the controversy by promising on Thursday to reimburse the government for the approximately \$52,000 cost of his own seat on his domestic trips. But that wasn't enough to tamp down the scandal, which had infuriated the president and prompted a bipartisan inquiry from the House Oversight Committee and separate calls for accountability from lawmakers including Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley. The inspector general of Price's own agency is reviewing if Price complied with federal travel regulations.

The White House put Cabinet officials on notice Friday that it would crack down on use of private planes, telling them chief of staff John Kelly must approve almost all travel on "government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft."

Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget, sent out the memo soon after Price's resignation was made public, reminding department and agency heads that, by regulation, "Government-owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft should not be used for travel by Government employees except with specific justification."

The issue of Cabinet members' travel has already extended beyond Price: POLITICO reported Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and his aides took several flights on private or military aircraft, including a \$12,000 charter plane to take him to events in his hometown in Montana and private flights in the Caribbean. Zinke dismissed the furor as a "little B.S." during a Friday appearance at the Heritage Foundation.

Price's wife, Betty, accompanied him on the military flights, while other members of the secretary's delegation flew commercially to Europe.

HHS spokeswoman Charmaine Yoest said Price reimbursed the agency for his wife's travel, but declined to elaborate.

White House officials have grouched about Price's frequent travels, with one senior White House official saying the HHS secretary was "nowhere to be found" as they mounted a last-ditch unsuccessful push to repeal Obamacare.

Congressional Democrats attacked Price for advocating spending cuts to the health agencies he oversaw and health care programs while spending taxpayer dollars on private jets. "There could not be a clearer statement of the Trump administration's priorities," Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) said. Key Democrats overseeing health issues in Congress had formally requested that HHS's inspector general review Price's travel practices.

In June, Price defended a proposed fiscal 2018 budget for HHS that included a \$663,000 cut to the agency's \$4.9 million annual spending on travel, or roughly 15 percent. "The budgeting process is an exercise in reforming our federal programs to make sure they actually work — so they do their job and use tax dollars wisely," Price told the Senate Finance Committee on June 8.

Ethical questions dogged Price even before questions about his travel arose. During his Senate confirmation hearing to helm HHS, Price faced pointed questions about his personal investments in health care companies during his time in Congress. Democrats called on government ethics officials to investigate Price's health care stock trades, following reports that he got a sweetheart deal from a biotech company and invested in Zimmer Biomet, a medical device-maker, just days before writing legislation that would have eased regulations on the sector.

The Senate confirmed Price by a 52-47 margin in February after he maintained full Republican support.

Price carved out a reputation as a staunch fiscal conservative during his decade-plus tenure in the House of Representatives. He generally supported reducing government spending on health care while shifting more of the financial burden onto individuals. Like most conservatives, he's supported privatizing Medicare so that seniors would receive fixed dollar amounts to buy coverage and limiting federal Medicaid spending to give states a lump sum, or block grant, and more control over how they could use it.

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Price traveled by private plane at least 24 times [Back](#)

By Rachana Pradhan and Dan Diamond | 09/21/2017 05:58 PM EDT

Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price has taken at least 24 flights on private charter planes at taxpayers' expense since early May, according to people with knowledge of his travel plans and a review of HHS documents.

The frequency of the trips underscores how private travel has become the norm — rather than the exception — for the Georgia Republican during his tenure atop the federal health agency, which began in February. The cost of the trips identified by POLITICO exceeds \$300,000, according to a review of federal contracts and similar trip itineraries.

Price's use of private jets represents a sharp departure from his two immediate predecessors, Sylvia Mathews Burwell and Kathleen Sebelius, who flew commercially in the continental United States. HHS officials have said Price uses private jets only when commercial travel is not feasible.

But many of the flights are between large cities with frequent, low-cost airline traffic, such as a trip from Washington to Nashville that the secretary took on June 6 to make a morning event at a medication distributor and an afternoon speech. There are four regular nonstop flights that leave Washington-area airports between 6:59 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. and arrive in Nashville by 9:46 a.m. CT. Sample round-trip fares for those flights were as low as \$202, when booked in advance on

Orbitz.com. Price's charter, according to HHS' contract with Classic Air Charter, cost \$17,760.

HHS spokespeople did not respond to questions about specific aspects of Price's travels, including how many charter trips he has taken. Charmaine Yoest, the agency's top spokesperson, said Price's travel for official business "comes from the HHS budget."

In a statement, Yoest said, "The Secretary has taken commercial flights for official business after his confirmation. He has used charter aircraft for official business in order to accommodate his demanding schedule. The week of September 13 was one of those times, as the Secretary was directing the recovery effort for Irma, which had just devastated Florida, while simultaneously directing the ongoing recovery for Hurricane Harvey . . . Some believe the HHS Secretary should be Washington-focused. Dr. Price is focused on hearing from Americans across the country."

Nonetheless, POLITICO identified at least 17 charter flights that took place before the first storm — Hurricane Harvey — hit in late August, and included flights that did not appear to be for urgent HHS public health priorities.

For example, Price took a Learjet-60 from San Diego to the Aspen Ideas Festival — a glamorous conference at the Colorado resort town — that arrived at 3:33 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, June 24, nearly 19 hours before his scheduled panel. That flight likely cost more than \$7,100, according to one charter jet agency estimate.

"If you're going to a conference, you have some [advance] flexibility to book travel" and shouldn't need last-minute charters, said Walter Shaub, who was the Barack Obama-appointed director of the United States Office of Government Ethics until July. "This shows a complete disregard for the expense to the taxpayer."

Since being confirmed in early February, Price has developed a reputation inside the agency for flying on private charters rather than taking other means of transportation, people inside and outside the Trump administration said.

After a POLITICO investigation identified five private flights that Price took up and down the East Coast last week, Price took a charter jet to Oklahoma on Tuesday of this week, Sept. 19, where he met with Native American tribes and toured health care facilities by car — although HHS initially explored flying him by charter around the state, two people with knowledge of Price's travels said. "There was a push from political [staff] at HHS to fly him and not drive him to these small communities," said one of the people.

Price's staff cut short his news conference in Oklahoma on Wednesday when reporters raised questions about his use of taxpayer funds, an attendee said.

Price's frequent trips around the country have rankled staff inside the White House, with a senior official saying many trips aren't related to priorities like Obamacare repeal and other items on the president's agenda. While Price has flown to Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania since last Wednesday, President Donald Trump and Senate Republicans have been

frantically rallying support to pass an Obamacare repeal bill by Sept. 30. After that date, the GOP will need 60 Senate votes, not 50, to overturn the 2010 health law.

"No one is quite sure what [Price] is doing," a senior White House official said. "You look at this week, we're doing a last final push trying to get this over the finish line, and he's nowhere to be found."

Many of Price's trips have centered on making announcements related to the use of opioids and holding listening sessions about the epidemic, which Trump labeled a national emergency and continues to contribute to rising death rates from drug abuse. Price has labeled fighting the opioid epidemic one of his top priorities.

But rather than fly commercially to these events, which are scheduled well in advance, Price tends to rent corporate-style jets. Sometimes, he ferries big-name guests along with him. In May, Price and Kellyanne Conway — the White House counselor and former Trump campaign manager who traveled with Price to Philadelphia last week to tour an addiction treatment center — made stops in four different states in the span of two days.

The pair traveled to Lansing, Michigan, and Charleston, West Virginia, for opioid-related meetings in the morning and early afternoon on May 9. That happened to be the same day Trump abruptly fired FBI Director James Comey. On May 10, Conway and Price were in Augusta, Maine, and Concord, New Hampshire, for more opioid-related events.

On July 6, Price again made an opioid-related visit to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he took a private plane, according to two sources with knowledge of the situation. According to records, HHS signed a \$14,570 charter plane contract for Washington to Tennessee travel with a July 6 effective date.

In June, Price spoke at a physicians association conference in San Diego, where he vowed to wring out wasteful spending in the government's health care programs. Getting "value" for spending "is incredibly important," he said.

Price took a private plane to get to the meeting, which was one stop on a five-state sprint of charter travel that cost \$50,420.

Josh Dawsey and Josh Gerstein contributed to this report.

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EPA watchdog expands investigation into Pruitt's travel [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 10/06/2017 03:26 PM EDT

EPA's inspector general says it is expanding the scope of its previously announced probe into Administrator Scott Pruitt's travel to include all of his travel.

The IG's office already opened an audit of Pruitt's travel to and from Oklahoma following complaints that he spent too much time back in his home state. In recent weeks, Democratic lawmakers and outside groups have called for the IG to look at whether Pruitt's non-commercial flights were necessary and appropriate expenses.

According to a [memo](#) dated Thursday and released today, the significantly expanded scope will consider the "frequency, cost and extent" of Pruitt's travel through Sept. 30, as well as whether agency procedures were followed by Pruitt, his security and his staff, and whether those procedures are properly designed to prevent fraud, waste or abuse.

"To accomplish these objectives, we will review supporting documentation and conduct interviews with management and staff to determine whether the EPA followed applicable policies and practices, and complied with federal requirements," the memo says.

WHAT'S NEXT: The investigation is likely to take several months to complete.

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Watchdog group requests Hatch Act probe of Zinke's appearance at Virgin Islands [Back](#)

By Nick Juliano, Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon | 10/06/2017 06:14 PM EDT

A watchdog group is asking the Justice Department's Office of Special Counsel to open a Hatch Act investigation into Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke after POLITICO [reported](#) he had appeared at a political fundraiser in the U.S. Virgin Islands while on an official trip less than a month after being confirmed.

Donors who gave the Virgin Islands Republican Party between \$1,500 and \$5,000 per couple were invited to get their photos taken with Zinke at the March 30 event, according to a copy of the invitation seen by POLITICO and Zinke's official schedule.

The nonprofit Campaign Legal Center says that activity may have run afoul of the federal law prohibiting federal officials from using government resources to engage in partisan political activity.

"This activity constitutes impermissible solicitation of political contributions if event organizers conditioned the opportunity to take a photograph with Secretary Zinke on paying a higher fee," [writes](#) Walter Shaub, the Campaign Legal Center's senior director for ethics, in a request to the OSC, citing POLITICO's story.

The invitation to the event said donors could get into the event at a St. Croix hotel with a contribution of as little as \$75. Zinke's official schedule from that day said he participated in a photo line with "host committee" members and "patrons" at the event. Those designations were given to donors who gave \$1,500 or \$5,000 per couple, according to the invitation.

Shaub, a former director of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, asked the OSC to investigate whether lower-paying guests also were allowed into the photo line. "Should OSC determine that this privilege was reserved for host committee members and Patrons, OSC should take action against Secretary Zinke," he writes.

The OSC typically opens an investigation in response to complaints it receives.

Interior officials have said all of Zinke's travel was legal and cleared in advance with ethics officials. A spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Campaign Legal Center's request.

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Trump's Interior chief 'hopping around from campaign event to campaign event' [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre and Esther Whieldon | 10/05/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Republican donors paid up to \$5,000 per couple for a photo with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at a fundraiser held during a taxpayer-funded trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to documents reviewed by POLITICO — raising questions about his habit of mixing official government business with political activism.

The new details about Zinke's March trip to the Caribbean, including the previously undisclosed invitation to the Virgin Islands Republican Party fundraiser, emerged after weeks of scrutiny of the former Montana GOP congressman's travels. The nearly two-hour event was one of more than a half-dozen times Zinke has met with big donors or political groups while on department-paid trips, Interior travel records and other documents show.

Ethics watchdogs say Zinke is combining politics with his Interior duties so frequently that he risks tripping over the prohibitions against using government resources for partisan activity, even though his appearance at the Virgin Islands event seems to have been legal. Democrats have also seized on the issue, including 26 House members who wrote in a letter Tuesday that Zinke's travels "give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business."

Zinke has said all his actions have obeyed the law, dismissing concerns about his travel as "a little BS."

But some ethics advocates say Zinke's attendance at a fundraiser during his first month as secretary is not in line with past administrations' conduct, even if he crossed no legal red lines.

"It happens on occasion with other Cabinet secretaries, perhaps even a little more often as you get near the election, but it is not a very common practice for Cabinet members to be hopping around from campaign event to campaign event like we're seeing with Zinke," said Craig Holman, government affairs specialist for government watchdog Public Citizen.

The secretary is already under investigation by his department's inspector general over his use of taxpayer-funded private planes for some of the trips, and the Justice Department's Office of Special Counsel is looking into an activist group's allegations that he violated the Hatch Act, the law limiting political activism by federal employees. The White House has cracked down on Cabinet members' travel habits following former HHS Secretary Tom Price's resignation on Friday, which occurred after POLITICO reported on his own expensive flights.

Zinke visited the Virgin Islands from March 30 to April 1 on an official trip related to the Interior Department's role overseeing the U.S. territory. On his first day, following a "veterans meet and greet" and a reception with Gov. Kenneth Mapp, he appeared in his personal capacity at a March fundraiser for the local Republican Party at the patio bar of the Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix, department records show.

Tickets for the fundraiser ranged from \$75 per person to as much as \$5,000 per couple to be an event "Patron," according to Zinke's official calendar and a copy of the invitation. Patrons and members of the host committee, who paid \$1,500 per couple, could get a photo with Zinke at the start of the event, which was attended by local party members and elected officials.

The following day, Zinke took a \$3,150 flight on a private plane, paid for by the department, from St. Croix to official functions on St. Thomas and returned later that evening. Interior Department officials said there was no other way to accommodate his schedule, which included official events on both islands commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Dutch government transferring control of the islands to the United States.

Zinke is allowed to engage in partisan political activity in a "purely personal (not official) capacity," so long as he does not use government resources, according to Interior Department guidelines on the Hatch Act and other federal laws. The invitation to the GOP fundraiser did not identify Zinke by his official title and included a disclaimer that the money is being solicited by the local party and "not by any federal official."

All told, Zinke has spent around \$20,000 for three charter flights as secretary, nowhere near the \$1 million tab Price racked up on non-commercial trips. But he has on numerous occasions attended political receptions, spoken to influential conservative groups or appeared alongside past campaign donors during trips has taken outside of Washington, D.C., for official department business.

In one instance, Zinke gave a motivational speech for a professional hockey team owned by a major campaign contributor that he said was official business — and which required him to

charter a \$12,000 flight to Montana for an appearance at the Western Governors Association the next day.

In another case, during a speech to the Western Conservative Summit in Denver, he was introduced via a recorded voice as the Interior secretary and Zinke proceeded to talk about the agency's priorities. The summit was organized by the Centennial Institute, which bills itself as Colorado Christian University's think tank and is a part of the State Policy Network of organizations that collectively push for conservative state-level legislation.

An Interior spokeswoman said Zinke always follows the law but declined to answer specific questions about his appearance at the Virgin Islands fundraiser, nor say whether he would keep raising political money. The agency also has yet to post Zinke's trip expenses involving any of the political events.

"The Interior Department under the Trump Administration has always and will always work to ensure all officials follow appropriate rules and regulations when traveling, including seeking commercial options at all times appropriate and feasible, to ensure the efficient use of government resources," spokeswoman Heather Swift said in a statement.

Swift did not respond to questions about whether the department had gotten reimbursement for the political portion of Zinke's three-day Virgin Islands trip, as the head of one watchdog group says it should have.

"Some of this travel is clearly political and that part of the travel should have been paid for by the RNC, NRCC, state political parties, a campaign committee or Zinke personally," said Daniel Stevens, executive director of the Campaign for Accountability.

No payments to the department are listed in the Virgin Islands Republican Party's FEC records.

Zinke is not the first Interior secretary, or Cabinet member, to have his activities questioned.

In 2012, a watchdog group called Cause of Action urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether President Barack Obama's then- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had violated the Hatch Act while taking an Obama reelection campaign RV tour of Colorado with a couple of lawmakers and the state lieutenant governor. Local organizers of one stop on that tour had billed Salazar on its online events calendar as attending the political rally in his official role. OSC would not say whether its investigation uncovered any problems, but travel records Interior has posted show that one of Salazar's aides had told the tour's coordinator the schedule "should not refer to (Salazar as) 'secretary.'" Salazar did not respond to a request for comment.

A former Salazar aide, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said the Obama administration generally tried to avoid scheduling political events that coincided with official travel because it was difficult to divvy up what expenses should be reimbursed by a campaign.

The special counsel's office found Obama HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in violation of the Hatch Act in 2012, saying she had made "extemporaneous partisan remarks" by endorsing a

candidate for North Carolina governor during a speech she made in her official capacity. Sebelius tried to scrub the violation by reclassifying the appearance as political and reimbursing the Treasury Department for costs associated with the trip.

Sally Jewell, who was Interior secretary during Obama's second term, said Zinke was within his rights to appear at the fundraiser in the Virgin Islands. Jewell said she once appeared at a fundraiser for Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell while in Obama's Cabinet, though she paid her own way to Washington state and was not identified by her official title.

"If he had legitimate business while he's on the island, to do a political thing on the side, I don't think that is that unusual," Jewell said in an interview.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt canceled his scheduled appearance at a fundraiser for the Oklahoma Republican Party in April because an invitation had identified him by his official title and said he would discuss his work at the agency. EPA ethics officials said he would have been cleared to attend the event if not for that language on the invitation.

Watchdog groups say Zinke's behavior fits a pattern for Trump's Cabinet.

"These government resources have been abused by this administration," said Virginia Canter, an executive branch ethics counsel for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington who previously worked as an ethics official for Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Obama. "To the extent that some of that supports their political ambitions is inconsistent with the intent of this authority."

The Campaign for Accountability called on Interior's inspector general and the Office of Special Counsel to investigate whether Zinke violated the Hatch Act or department ethics rules with his speech to the hockey team, which the group said appeared to be a favor for a donor. Interior's IG office announced its investigation earlier this week, and OSC told the Campaign for Accountability that it was looking into the group's complaint, according to an email shared with POLITICO. The OSC declined to comment.

Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.) have asked Interior's IG to also look into any trips on which the secretary was accompanied by his wife, Lola Zinke, who is chairing the campaign of Montana Republican Troy Downing, a candidate to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Tester next year. Swift said Lola Zinke was not in the Virgin Islands and has paid her own way whenever she has traveled with her husband on official trips.

Many who know him see Zinke's travels as an attempt to keep in touch with political contacts as he contemplates what he will do after leaving the Trump administration. Back home, the 55-year-old former Montana congressman is seen as an attractive candidate for the open-seat governor's race in 2020, when Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock will have to step down because of term limits.

"I think he's definitely got political aspirations; that's one of the reasons why he is where he is at right now," said Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a

Montana-based sportsman group that supported Zinke's bid for Interior secretary. "You don't go from being a Montana legislator to a first-term congressman to [Interior] secretary without having ambition."

The Virgin Islands trip was Zinke's first interaction with big donors or influential conservative groups during his travel as Interior secretary.

A weeklong trip in May that took Zinke through Montana, Utah and California also offered a chance to squeeze in some political events.

Zinke delivered the keynote speech at the RNC spring meeting on May 11 in Coronado, Calif. Zinke had flown to California the previous night, after several days touring monuments in Utah, and the RNC speech was his only event in the state aside from a meeting earlier that afternoon with Rep. Amata Radewagen, the Republican delegate from American Samoa, and members of the American Tunaboat Association.

The next day, Zinke flew back to Montana, where he joined Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Vice President Mike Pence to tour a coal mine on the Crow Indian reservation operated by the Westmoreland Coal Co.

The trip offered Zinke and Pence an opportunity to tout the Trump administration's work to promote new coal mining on federal lands — and it allowed them to make a brief detour to promote Zinke's congressional replacement. That Friday night, Zinke, Pence and Daines attended a political rally for GOP candidate Greg Gianforte, and Zinke attended a get-out-the vote event for the Montana GOP the next day.

Zinke apparently paid for his return trip to Washington out of his own pocket — it was marked "personal travel" on his calendar, a designation not applied to the other flights on that trip.

Gianforte, whose wife is a major political donor in Montana, won the May 25 special election to take over Zinke's House seat.

Greg and Susan Gianforte donated more than \$10,000 to Zinke's 2016 congressional campaign and another \$10,000 to a joint Zinke-Daines PAC, according to federal records. The couple donated \$5,000 for his earlier run for Congress.

Zinke met with big influencers and donors in June as well.

On June 25, he flew from D.C. to Reno, Nev., where his only scheduled event was a meeting of the Rule of Law Defense Fund, a group of Republican attorneys general that has been linked to the Koch brothers, where he spoke and took questions for about 30 minutes, according to his schedule.

After his remarks, he sat at a dinner table with Montana's attorney general, the government relations specialist for the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Las Vegas Sands, and Koch Industries lobbyist Allen Richardson, Interior documents show.

The next day, Zinke flew to Las Vegas for an event on public lands in nearby Pahrump, Nev., and a speech that night to the National Hockey League's Vegas Golden Knights. Bill Foley, the team owner and chairman of Fidelity, introduced Zinke. Foley donated \$7,800 to Zinke's 2014 campaign, while employees and PACs associated with Fidelity and related companies gave another \$180,000. Interior officials said the speech to the NHL team was part of Zinke's official duties, and they pointed to scheduling conflicts it created to justify his use of a \$12,000 private plane to get to a Western Governors Association meeting in Montana the next day.

In July, Zinke spoke to several conservative groups in Colorado during a three-day trip that also included tours of Interior Department facilities in the state. He flew into Denver on July 20 so he could appear that evening at a closed-door reception for the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group of conservative state legislators, lobbyists and industry groups that has pushed for more state control over federal lands.

And over the next two days, he was a featured speaker at a Republican committee roundtable and attended the Western Conservative Summit in Denver.

Eric Wolff contributed to this report.

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Trump administration does not plan to extend Puerto Rico Jones Act waiver past Sunday

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By Ben Lefebvre | 10/06/2017 03:58 PM EDT

Foreign vessels may soon be barred again from delivering goods from other U.S. ports to disaster-struck Puerto Rico, DHS said today.

The administration does not plan on renewing the Jones Act waiver, DHS spokesman David Lapan said. The 10-day waiver issued last month ends on Sunday, after which foreign vessels will no longer be able to load ships at domestic ports for delivery to the U.S. territory; those ships will have until Oct. 18 to deliver their cargoes.

"We believe that extending the waiver is unnecessary to support the humanitarian relief efforts on the island," Lapan said in an email to POLITICO. "There is an ample supply of Jones Act-qualified vessels to ensure that cargo is able to reach Puerto Rico."

President Trump [authorized](#) a lifting of the Jones Act on Sept. 28 to help deliver fuel and other goods after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico a week earlier. The island is still recovering from the storm, with electricity only reaching a small fraction of the population.

Rep. [Nydia Velazquez](#) (D-N.Y.) sent a letter to Trump today asking that the waiver be extended for at least a year, her spokesman said, arguing that reinstating it will drive up the cost of shipping supplies to the island.

WHAT'S NEXT: The waiver will end Sunday unless another request is received.

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State Dept's Shannon to lead U.S. delegation to climate talks [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 10/06/2017 07:18 PM EDT

Thomas Shannon, the State Department's undersecretary for political affairs, will lead the U.S. delegation to a major international climate change summit next month in Bonn, Germany, according to an administration official.

The news comes amid swirling rumors that Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt was angling to lead the delegation, a move that would have made a skeptic of established climate science the face of the United States at the talks.

In previous years, the State Department's climate envoy led the U.S. delegation to the annual gathering. But the Trump administration has declined to fill that position.

The Bonn negotiations are aimed at implementing the 2015 Paris climate change agreement, from which President Donald Trump has said he intends to withdraw.

Neither the White House nor the State Department responded to requests for comment.

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D.C. Circuit: FERC must consider GHG emissions tied to gas pipelines [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 08/22/2017 11:38 AM EDT

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled today that FERC must consider the potential greenhouse gas emissions that could result from its 2016 approval of three natural gas pipeline segments in the Southeast, marking a major victory for environmental groups.

The court vacated FERC's approval of the Southeast Market Pipelines Project's three natural gas pipelines now under construction in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, and said the agency must

redo the environmental impact statement it used in its decision.

Two of the three judges on court's panel rejected FERC's assertions that it could not know the level of GHG emissions that would result from its projects, specifically from power plants burning the natural gas the pipelines would provide.

"We conclude that at a minimum, FERC should have estimated the amount of power-plant carbon emissions that the pipelines will make possible," the [opinion](#) said, agreeing with the Sierra Club's arguments.

The court in 2016 made a much different ruling when it held FERC did not evaluate the climate change effects of exporting natural gas from LNG terminals since the agency had no legal authority to consider the environmental harm those exports may cause.

But Judge Janice Rogers Brown, a President George W. Bush appointee, dissented and said FERC lacks authority in this case as well, and is not required to consider the downstream emissions. "The truth is that FERC has no control over whether the power plants that will emit these greenhouse gases will come into existence or remain in operation," Brown said.

WHAT'S NEXT: FERC will have to rerun its EIS for the pipeline projects.

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FERC amends pipeline study to add climate impact [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 09/27/2017 04:31 PM EDT

FERC [announced](#) today that it is amending an environmental study for a natural gas pipeline to meet a federal court's requirement that it include an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the power plants that may use the fuel.

The [new 5-page analysis](#) of the Southeast Market Pipelines Project, which consists of three natural gas pipelines under construction in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, conducted by FERC staff says they "would not result in a significant impact on the environment" so long as the developer followed the mitigation measures mentioned in the final 2015 environmental impact statement.

The original EIS didn't include an assessment of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide emissions associated with use and combustion of the natural gas that would be transported by the project when it was done. Last month, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the Sierra Club and [vacated](#) FERC's approval of the project, saying the agency must redo the EIS it used in its decision.

FERC's move to issue a supplemental EIS on greenhouse gas emissions suggests that it may not appeal the court's decision.

The analysis also states that using the social cost of carbon in its greenhouse gas analysis "is not appropriate for use in any project-level NEPA review."

WHAT'S NEXT: FERC has until Oct. 6 to decide whether it will appeal the D.C. Circuit's Aug. 22 ruling, which could require the agency to revisit the EISs it conducted for several pipelines.

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The Strange Political Afterlife of Arnold Schwarzenegger [Back](#)

By Edward-Isaac Dove | 10/06/2017 05:04 AM EDT

MUNICH, Germany—The Governor is off to conduct the band at his favorite beer tent at Oktoberfest. Why? Well, he finished his salty half-chicken, gave the photographers the pose he knew they wanted—the one in which he's holding the giant beer stein and mime-biting the oversize pretzel—and he's not quite ready for dessert.

Oh, but *why*? Because he wants to. The crowd chants his name. He crouches forward, making a show of drawing out the tubas with his fingers. He does a muscleman pose. He pretends to blow a trumpet. In the beer tent, he makes his pecs dance.

Welcome to the strange and wondrous political afterlife of Arnold Schwarzenegger, a rural Austrian kid who parlayed his success as perhaps the greatest bodybuilder of all time into a lucrative career as Hollywood's top action hero, then parlayed *that* into becoming the improbable Republican governor of California for two terms.

Now, six years after leaving Sacramento, he's still reinventing himself—as a kind of globetrotting do-gooder, promoting a handful of causes like fighting climate change and gerrymandering. But mostly, he's having a hell of a good time. Wherever he goes, everybody knows him. Everybody loves him. With a net worth estimated at \$300 million, he zips around the world in private jets and has restaurant owners pick up his tab because they're just so honored he chose to eat there. Constant selfies. He sounds off on whatever he wants, but has no actual responsibility. His perfect day is waking up and not knowing what country he'll eat dinner in.

On this particular Tuesday afternoon, Schwarzenegger is stopping at the Munich Oktoberfest just for fun, part of a whirlwind 10-day European tour that began with inspirational speeches in England, then a jaunt to a factory in Austria to test out the new electric Hummer converted just for him, then to Barcelona for his Arnold Classic bodybuilding tournament, then popping up to San Sebastián, Spain, to premiere the 3-D "Wonders of the Sea" movie from Jean-Michel Cousteau that he narrated and produced. Then here to Munich, for a stop he's been making

regularly since he was a young bodybuilder and won a stone-lifting contest (508 German pounds, or about 560 American pounds). The next day, he'll have his assistant scramble a plane for a drop-in at Arnie's Life Museum, the Schwarzenegger shrine in the house where he grew up in the hills outside Graz, Austria. Then, it's back to the U.S. to hear oral arguments in *Gill v. Whitford*, the nonpartisan redistricting case that's become his latest passion, and to L.A. again to host an appreciation dinner for Republicans in the California Legislature who backed his push for a stiffer crackdown on greenhouse gases.

All of a sudden, a guy who just turned 70—in Barcelona, he celebrated the 50th anniversary of winning Mr. Universe, which began his breakthrough—and had seen politics pass him by is ... back. But why? Schwarzenegger is barred from another run for governor and has no interest in the Senate; a certain clause in the Constitution is keeping him out of the White House. He's making movies again, though nothing huge. In a Hillary Clinton presidency, he had been planning to be one of the Republican moderate voices urging his party to find ways to work together. The Schwarzenegger Institute at USC would be hosting after-school program summits and earnest environmental speeches. It would have been his own peculiar form of keeping busy, but with nothing like the urgency he feels now.

Instead, Schwarzenegger is back in the public eye because of what he calls "a disastrous situation"—the Trump presidency. It's the topic he can't escape, even at his news conference in San Sebastián about the oceans documentary. *What do you think of Trump? What do you think people should do about Trump?* In Spain, he deflects. He's there to promote the movie, and he wants the headline to be about Cousteau's film, which he backed because the French oceanographer convinced him that people will be more likely to save the ocean if they fall in love with it.

In the air two days later, flying back from checking in on his museum, he answers: He avoids talking about Trump in these situations because after all those years of having cameras chase him wherever he goes, he knows how the media work—whatever he says about Trump becomes *the* quote, and he wants to talk about his other causes.

But Schwarzenegger is perfectly happy to blow his way into Trump's spotlight when it suits him—he even keeps a bobblehead of Trump in his kitchen that he used for a [viral video](#) in which he lectured the president about racism. Cameras swarmed his after-school summit at USC this year after he made another video slamming Trump for a budget proposing major cuts, and Trump took time out of the National Prayer Breakfast to swipe at him. Every word he says about environmentalism gets more attention since Trump announced the withdrawal from the Paris global climate accord, and he gets to brag about relative GDP growth on his watch: "If the federal government, Republicans and Democrats, and Donald Trump and his whole White House would be smart, they would just copy exactly what we are doing in California," he said in Spain.

He also gets Trump on a visceral level—like they're twins, say, separated at birth. They are the same age. Both have been global celebrities for decades—Schwarzenegger ever since he first won the Mr. Universe competition at age 20, which he later [said](#) was "my ticket to America, the land of opportunity, where I could become a star and get rich." Each has a history of boasting about his sexual conquests and an instinct for the viral quote—like Schwarzenegger's famous riff

comparing pumping iron to orgasms. One man claims never to have had a headache, stomachache or allergy; the other's doctor declared him the fittest man ever to seek the presidency. One was underestimated by political elites because of his Austrian accent and bulging physique; the other due to his outer-borough mannerisms and outrageous statements. And whereas Arnold's fame skyrocketed, thanks to showdowns with Lou Ferrigno and the evil T-1000, Donald has turned his penchant for tabloid-fueled feuds into a governing philosophy.

So doesn't it complicate things to have people ask him about Trump all the time, to have the leader of the free world tweet about his *Celebrity Apprentice* ratings?

Not at all, Schwarzenegger says. "Trump helps me." And maybe, in a way, he's even doing more good than harm. "A lot of times, we crucify Trump for doing certain things, and then in the end, deep down inside, [it's like] 'Well actually, that was helpful,'" he says. "People get more educated because he starts talking about things that no one ever thought about."

Schwarzenegger's father was literally a Nazi, though an investigation by the Simon Wiesenthal Center found no evidence his dad had ever committed any atrocities. The general subject of Nazis is one he usually avoids, but he says he can't understand Trump's reluctance to condemn the white supremacists after violent protests in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"We have seen the history of that kind of behavior. It's not like this is new," he tells me. "This has always gone in the wrong fucking direction in history. I'm not a history buff or anything, but there's one thing I know: that that is not good."

"Last Action Hero!" an American woman in the crowd shouts as he walks off the bandstand.

"Save America, Arnold!" shouts another next to her.

***Last Action Hero*, Schwarzenegger tells me later**, was a movie he knew was bad as they were making it. The director said he wanted to make *E.T. That's not going to work*, he remembers saying in his trailer. People come to see an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, they hear the words "last action hero" and they figure no one else survives and he's shooting his way through.

This is what it's like to hang out with the Governator, who had invited me to tag along with him in Europe because ... well, I'm not exactly sure why. He is bursting with theories and opinions about everything, and enjoys talking about movies, and politics, and culture, and sports, and public policy—and whatever else crosses his mind.

Now we're in the backyard of his childhood home that's been turned into a museum, a two-story yellow house stuffed with memorabilia from his weightlifting and movie careers. For reasons no one can quite explain, the yard is now filled with a collection of giant Transformers sculptures. He wasn't in any of the movies, and he's only seen the first one (it didn't hold him, he says, because it was all explosions and no plot). Nowadays, his tastes run to artier fare, like *Black Swan* or *Dunkirk*—lots of shooting and stuff blowing up, but with a point.

There are three mannequins of him inside, plus the giant flexing bronze outside by the front door. He makes fun of the haircut on the one from his bodybuilding days, now standing in what used to be his parents' bedroom.

"What's it like to have a museum to yourself?" I ask him as he takes a seat at a table set up for us downstairs with glasses of schnapps and a spread of pastries. "I don't think about it," he says. He has a jelly-filled doughnut, and launches into a 10-minute speech about what he learned from the local politicians he admired in Austria as a teenager.

Schwarzenegger speaks in sports metaphors. He says that every policy debate, even health care, has a sweet spot that would make it fly if everyone could just work together to hit it. He also talks in terms of machines and guns, when he's not throwing in the odd reference to Milton Friedman. Certain people have a chip wrong in them, he'll say, or he'll explain the philosophy of how he pursues his causes by imagining how a robot from the future might do it. "It's the shotgun approach versus the rifle approach. This is the rifle approach. Specific target. This is where I go. Let's not spread out and try five different things," he says.

Schwarzenegger throws his money around for what he believes in—"I couldn't tell you a system. It's really a gut reaction kind of thing," he says. He talks about it in \$100,000 chunks. After Charlottesville, the Simon Wiesenthal Center got a chunk, plus all the proceeds from a "Terminate Hate" T-shirt he had made up with red, white and blue flowers sticking out of the barrel in one of his most iconic images, the one of him in the leather jacket and sunglasses. The center's founder, Rabbi Marvin Hier—also famous for delivering the Jewish blessing at Trump's inauguration—questioned whether they should have a gun on an anti-hate T-shirt. *Come on*, Schwarzenegger told him. *It's the Terminator*.

He got involved in after-school programs after visiting schools while working on the president's council on fitness in the 1980s. The Special Olympics taught him the value of government funding. He recycled before he was elected, but only when he was governor did he get interested in actual environmental policy. Infrastructure and immigration stuck with him, and above all, to his surprise, he became attached to the issues of gerrymandering and election reform.

"There were certain things that stuck because I got exposed to it, and then all of a sudden, something in me found great joy in it," he says.

Schwarzenegger has always been ambitious—he's a firm believer in having a vision of success, and *willing* it to happen, like the first time he bench-pressed 500 pounds—but he got into politics on a whim. He tells the story like this: When he started in movies, Sylvester Stallone was the enemy. Schwarzenegger didn't like him, and didn't like that he was the top box-office draw. He set out to take him down. Twenty years later, he felt like California's then-governor Gray Davis was a jerk to him in a meeting about after-school programs, and suddenly the Terminator became obsessed with knocking him out.

In San Sebastián, over red wine and cheese and bread—after years of fanatic abstemious dieting, he's happy to indulge in some carbs—he whips out his iPad and records a video that he turns into

an endorsement on the fly for Rep. Rod Blum, the Iowa Republican who was one of the three dozen members of Congress whom Schwarzenegger called last month, urging them to sign on to an amicus brief in the gerrymandering case. Somewhere over France on the way to Munich the next morning, he tinkers with a statement on an arcane dispute between two warring bodybuilding federations. In Graz the next day, he bats around taking up Prince Albert's offer to have a private jet pick him up for a gala in Monaco celebrating Leonardo DiCaprio and protecting the oceans. Ultimately, he decides not to go. But he was never going to get in a tuxedo for it—"I don't like rules," he explains.

At the Supreme Court on Tuesday for the gerrymandering arguments, he couldn't get around the no cellphone rule. Schwarzenegger loves FaceTime and Snapchat; once, he even pulled out his iPad to record a video in the middle of a papal mass at the Vatican. But he loved seeing the justices in action for the first time, remarking on how they jumped all over the lawyers arguing the case, and each other.

Outside, on the court steps, he rebuts the conservative justices' main argument against killing gerrymandering: that it's a political problem, and not one the courts should adjudicate. "As Einstein said, those who created the problem will not be able to solve it," Schwarzenegger says.

Afterward, at a rally for Common Cause, the good-government group, he explains why of all things, he's made this his cause. In California, he saw gerrymandering lead to the parties running to their respective corners and not getting anything done, and he says the same thing has happened in Washington. "It's time to say, 'Hasta la vista' to gerrymandering. Terminate it!"

The way Schwarzenegger sees it, nothing major has gotten done in America since 2000. Congress has a lower approval rating than herpes, he likes to joke. So that's where he comes in.

"I came to America. I made my money in America. Now, let's fix America," he told me. His adopted country is starting to come apart, he worries, and it's because no one has shown the leadership to bring it together.

"I see down the line a decline, and we get a little bit of a taste of that now. There is a lack of working together. No one sees themselves as a team. It's all about 'Me, me, me.' That's not America," he says. "My biggest fear is: If this plane takes off and the pilot doesn't know where we're going, we'll be flying around and we may crash. Because no one was telling where we're going. Same thing with this."

A friend of Schwarzenegger's, the German bodybuilder-turned-actor Ralf Möller, a towering hulk of a man who played a bruiser in *Gladiator*, tells me at Oktoberfest that he wants me to write that his friend should be secretary of state.

How about that?, I ask Schwarzenegger later.

He responds by rattling off other jobs that might interest him—EPA, Energy. But the State idea

clearly intrigues him.

"It's just that if a president asks me, and says, 'Go and step in, you could really move the agenda,' of course, I would do it. We would figure out the rules, figure out what I can do, am I just a puppet in there—'Do I have to ask some schmuck from the White House to go and make a move?'" he says, the misadventures of Rex Tillerson and Jeff Sessions on his mind. "No, I would never do that, because my ego would never allow it. And the country doesn't deserve it."

He says he'd even consider it if the call came in from Trump. His ex-wife's mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, he says, taught him, "You never ever turn down a president." (Later, he jokes: "Maybe I can't be in the Cabinet because I fly commercial too much.")

The job he really wants, he knows, is out of reach. "I'd be running in two seconds if I was born in America," he says.

Flying back from his old house to his fancy hotel in Munich in the private jet, having happily obliged the latest airport police officer who slyly slid out his phone for a picture with him, he says he's made his peace with that.

"I can't make myself be angry about it because everything else that I've accomplished is because of America. So how can I complain about the one thing that I can't do? Hello? Look where I'm sitting," he says. "I didn't even dream half of it."

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Fri 6/30/2017 11:53:18 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle: SENATORS HEAD HOME WITH NO DEAL ON HEALTH CARE – Trump now pushing ‘repeal then replace’ – CBO: OCTOBER DEBT LIMIT DEADLINE – House panel threatens subpoena over Comey “tapes”

06/30/2017 07:51 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

With an assist from Seung Min Kim

DAZED AND CONFUSED - GOP senators head home for a 10-day recess with little progress to show on their effort to repeal Obamacare and some feeling overwhelmed by the entire process. "Our members seem to have too much information and are almost in mental lockdown," said one Republican senator, who was perplexed at where the party goes from here, Burgess, Seung Min and Sarah Karlin-Smith report. "I can't imagine going home for 10 days is helpful."

The latest: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), still far from a deal that can get 50 votes, is instead hoping to send over a collection of new proposals today that the CBO can analyze over recess. The options include maintaining Obamacare taxes that could help subsidize insurance for low-income enrollees, allowing pre-tax health savings accounts to pay for insurance premiums (a conservative favorite) and directing \$45 billion to fight the opioid epidemic.

Republican leaders hope to vote on the bill by mid-July, with the August recess serving as the hard deadline. In the meantime, senators head home to likely get pummeled by pro-Obamacare activists and angry voters. "Mitch might try and break arms" to get the bill through, said a second Republican senator. "I think it needs to sit in the crock-pot a little longer." More:

<http://politi.co/2twQBHE>

Only complicating matters, "If Republican Senators are unable to pass what they are working on now, they should immediately REPEAL, and then REPLACE at a later date!" President Donald Trump [tweeted](#) this morning. This isn't likely to happen but the mixed messaging from the president - just the other day he said it'd be "ok" if they can't get a repeal done - surely doesn't help. Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) was on Fox pitching the "repeal then replace" idea a few minutes before Trump's tweet ([h/t Phil Mattingly](#))

YOU'VE GOT MAIL - A group of senators is sending a letter to McConnell this morning asking him to cancel or shorten August recess if they don't make significant headway on their lengthy to-do list in July. Burgess has the scoop: "Spearheaded by Sen. David Perdue of Georgia, the bloc of 10 senators said the five-week break should be on the table if Republicans don't make progress on repealing Obamacare, passing a budget, averting a government shutdown at the end of September, avoiding a debt default and get to their top priority: Reforming the tax code."

More: <http://politi.co/2u5DA1l>

GOP CENTRISTS LINE UP AGAINST BUDGET - "Centrist House Republicans are lining up to oppose a draft GOP budget aimed at curbing entitlement spending - and threatening to vote against the plan if they don't get a bipartisan deal to increase spending caps," Rachael and Sarah Ferris report. Tuesday Group co-chairman Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) is gathering signatures on a letter - he has about 20 so far - warning leadership that House Budget Chairwoman Diane Black's (R-Tenn.) plan to slash \$200 billion in mandatory spending in "not practical" and "could imperil tax reform." More: <http://politi.co/2twXvww>

HOUSE RUSSIA INVESTIGATORS THREATEN SUBPOENA - Reps. Mike Conaway (R-Texas) and Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), leaders of the House's Russia investigation, "are threatening to subpoena the White House for records of President Donald Trump's conversations with former FBI Director James Comey, saying a tweet from the president isn't enough to clear things up," Austin reports. More: <http://politi.co/2u5WE2E>

YOUR MOVE, HOUSE - The Senate on Thursday approved a procedural tweak to their bipartisan sanctions package against Russia and Iran, upping the pressure on the House to clear the proposal without first implementing changes requested by the White House. "I want to put the House on notice: If they water down the bill, weaken the sanctions, add loopholes to the legislation - they will find stiff resistance here in the Senate," Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said on the floor Thursday. Elana with the deets: <http://politi.co/2tx2s8z>

HEY GUYS, WE MADE IT TO FRIDAY, JUNE 30. High fives all around. Thanks for reading POLITICO's Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill. Your Huddle host is hitting the road, heading to Alabama for a little family time over the weekend before winding our way back up through North Carolina and Charlottesville, Virginia. Got suggestions for good road trip jams? Send em my way: hcaygle@politico.com

Programming note: Your favorite morning newsletter will be taking Monday and Tuesday off to celebrate Independence Day. Huddle will be back in the game Wednesday, July 5. Here's a picture of Biggie the pup playing softball to get you through the long break: <http://bit.ly/2tx5tW6>

THURSDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Annie Linskey's super good [Boston Globe profile](#) on Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) was the winner.

JCN TARGETING STABENOW, PETERS - The Judicial Crisis Network, a conservative advocacy group focusing on the courts, is pouring \$140,000 into a new ad campaign going after Michigan Democratic Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters over a circuit judge nominated from their home state. Michigan Supreme Court Justice Joan Larsen - Trump's pick for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals - hasn't yet had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa implied earlier this week that Larsen may be getting held up by her Democratic home-state senators through the obscure blue-slip process.

A committee spokesman confirmed Thursday that blue slips - which, according to longstanding Senate tradition, have to be returned to the Judiciary Committee in order to get a hearing scheduled - have not been submitted for Larsen's nomination. "Justice Larsen - overwhelmingly reelected, she applies the law, not a political agenda," the 30-second ad says.

"So why aren't Senators Stabenow and Peters supporting her nomination to the US Court of Appeals? Partisan politics." Watch the ad, here: <http://bit.ly/2tx7RMMy>

TWEETS DU JOUR: Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), dean of the House, was sharply dressed on Thursday, rocking a polka dot sport coat and a sunflower tie. @OfficialCBC: You can't be dean if you don't look this clean. @RepJohnConyers - "Serving [fire] in Congress Since 1965" *See the pic:* <http://bit.ly/2s6XdYw>

-Speaker Ryan pulled the ultimate "dad" move in this picture with Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.): @JimPressOffice: A fun moment between friends: @SpeakerRyan gives the Dean his belated birthday gift on the Speaker's Balcony! *See the pic:* <http://bit.ly/2u60J7c>

-Rep. Jason Chaffetz, who's leaving the House today, says goodbye to his beloved cot in one tweet. "Bye bye," he captioned it. *See the pic:* <http://bit.ly/2s67Lay>

REPUBLICANS 'CAN TOLERATE' ANYTHING - Lawmakers across the Capitol denounced Trump's graphic tweets on Thursday about Morning Joe co-host Mika Brzezinski's appearance, with Speaker Ryan calling the remarks "not appropriate." But House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) had one of the most searing responses, saying Trump's tweets are "blatantly sexist" yet Republicans continue to accept such behavior. "The Republicans, they can tolerate almost anything-a candidate beating up a reporter and then cheering him on as he arrives in Congress, the tweets of the president of the United States," she told reporters. "They set a low standard for public officials in terms of their demeanor."

OCTOBER (NOT SO) SURPRISE - Congress now has until sometime in October to raise the debt ceiling, CBO said in a report Thursday. The date from the nonpartisan scoring office provides some specificity for lawmakers after top administration officials spent weeks publicly contradicting each other about when to raise the nation's debt limit. It's unclear if the latest CBO estimate will slow GOP momentum, particularly on the Senate side, for hiking the debt ceiling before lawmakers leave for August recess. Sarah Ferris with more: <http://politi.co/2s6zfgi>

RNC'S STRANGE LOVE - After weeks of wrangling, the RNC has finally greenlighted funding for Sen. Luther Strange in the Alabama special election, Alex Isenstadt reports. "McConnell, who has made the race a personal priority, had spent weeks trying to get the RNC to approve its funding. The drawn-out nature of the talks became such a point of contention that in recent days the majority leader lobbied White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, a former RNC head who remains plugged into the committee's operations, to help get the funds released. Strange himself spoke with President Donald Trump." More: <http://politi.co/2s6yEex>

Not so fast, RNC: "A bombastic Alabama real estate developer has formed a new PAC devoted to defeating GOP Sen. Luther Strange in the upcoming Alabama Senate special election," Maggie Severns and Daniel Strauss report for Pros. Read more: <http://politico.pro/2u5TZGc>

RYAN: AUMF REPEAL 'A MISTAKE' - Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) thinks it was a "'mistake' for the House Appropriations Committee to adopt an amendment repealing the authorization for military force used as the legal underpinning for the war against ISIS," he told

RealClearPolitics' James Arkin. After Rep. Barbara Lee's (D-Calif.) amendment surprisingly passed, there was chatter about whether members knew it was binding. But Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), a committee cardinal, said lawmakers knew what they were doing. "It's time for leadership to wake up, and the administration to wake up, and send over a recommended AUMF, mark it up and take it to the floor," Cole said. More: <http://bit.ly/2u63bdO>

Bye bye: As the Washington Post's Mike DeBonis points out, the provision is likely to be removed before it even hits the floor, in the House Rules Committee: <http://wapo.st/2u6fC9l>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD BABY MARTER - The Huddle world has its newest reader this week: Ben Marter, communications director for Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), and his wife, Jean Marter, director of committee operations for House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.), welcomed baby Kerry Jane on Wednesday. "It's our second and a good thing big brother George already knows the words to Let It Go..." Ben wrote in an email sharing the news. **See the sweet pic:** <http://politi.co/2u5wP2F>

SPOTTED - At the National Confectioners Association and FamousDC's National Candy Month celebration at Sonoma last night: Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.), Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.), Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.), Tony Fratto and Michael Steel of Hamilton Place Strategies, Matt Wolking of Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) office, Meghan Whittemore with Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.) and Katie Boyd with Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), S3's Amos Snead and Stephanie Genco, Andrew Kovalcin of Advanced Advocacy, Joe Maloney and Ben Jenkins of Locust Street Group, Nathan Imperiale and Josh Schultz of NJI, and a cast of thousands.

TODAY IN CONGRESS - Congress is gone, gone, gone until July 10.

AROUND THE HILL - Staffers getting that holiday break started early with some sweet 90's jams: <http://bit.ly/2u5GXIK>

THURSDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Porter Byers was the first to correctly guess that in the late 1800's bikes were stored in the Capitol Crypt, beneath which George Washington was originally supposed to be buried.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Porter has today's *two-part* trivia question (gotta hold you guys over until Huddle returns Wednesday): Barack Obama is one of more than a dozen presidents who was elected as governor or to the legislature in a state other than his birth state. Of the others, who was the most recent **and** who was the first? The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle. Send answers my way: hcaygle@politico.com

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Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: THE LATEST from Saudi Arabia -- 110 billion dollars in military sales -- H.R. McMaster and Jared high five in Riyadh -- Twin-barrel TRUMP scoops by NYT and WaPo -- B'DAY: Craig Melvin

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05/20/2017 10:48 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

Good Saturday morning. While you were sleeping, President Donald Trump landed in Saudi Arabia. **THE WHITE HOUSE** is announcing \$110 billion in immediate military sales to Saudi Arabia, and an additional \$350 billion over 10 years, per Jerome Cartillier of the AFP, who is the pooler along with our own Annie Karni.

-- **FROM THE WHITE HOUSE** (off embargo at 9:30 a.m. in D.C., and 4:30 p.m. in Riyadh): **"This package of defense equipment and services support** the long-term security of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region in the face of Iranian threats, while also bolstering the Kingdom's ability to contribute to counterterrorism operations across the region, reducing the burden on the U.S. military to conduct those operations.

"This package demonstrates, in the clearest terms possible, the United States' commitment to our partnership with Saudi Arabia and our Gulf partners, while also expanding opportunities for American companies in the region, and supporting tens of thousands of new jobs in the U.S. defense industrial base."

THE LATEST FROM ANNIE KARNI, per a pool report : "The American delegation appeared to be in high spirits, following a long and lavish lunch and ahead of the [bilateral with Saudi Arabia] ... At 3:52 p.m., Jared Kushner greeted H.R. McMaster with a high-five when he entered the room where the bilat would be held. Bannon stood around chatting with Tillerson. Priebus appeared to be reviewing a schedule on someone else's tablet."

OVERHEARD: CBS had a camera set up that caught a conversation between King Salman and President Trump, per pooler Jerome Cartillier, of AFP. King Salman to Trump: "Syria too used to be one of the most advanced countries. We used to get our professors from Syria. They served our kingdom. Unfortunately, they too brought

destruction to their own country. You could destroy a country in mere seconds, but it takes a lot of effort."

TRUMP was awarded the gold medallion, known as the King Abdul Aziz Collar, the highest honor in Saudi Arabia, per the pool. Here's what the Saudis said when Trump got the award: "For President Donald Trump, the president of the United States of America, his efforts to strengthen the relationship between the two friendly countries ... and his quest to enhance security and peace ... in the region and the world ... the highest medal in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on President Donald Trump of the United States."

TALKER from ANNIE KARNI in Riyadh: "**Team Trump lands in Saudi, minus headscarves**": "The women traveling with President Donald Trump debarked from Air Force One in Riyadh on Saturday morning wearing flowing long sleeves, but no headscarves. First lady Melania Trump emerged from the front of the plane with the president, for their first appearance abroad, dressed in a black long-sleeved pantsuit and an oversized gold belt, her brown hair hanging down over her shoulders. ...

"**There would normally be nothing out of the ordinary** about American women dressing without headscarves in deeply conservative Saudi Arabia, where local women are required to cover themselves in public. Visiting Western women are expected to cover their arms and legs, but not necessarily their heads, and world leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have chosen to forgo a headscarf on official visits here.

"**Except that for many moments in Trump's presidency**, there is an old tweet from his feed to resurrect that seems to contradict his current actions -- and the arrival here was no exception. When former first lady Michelle Obama visited Riyadh in 2015 with her husband, to pay respects to the late Saudi King Abdullah, she did not cover her hair. 'Many people are saying it was wonderful that Mrs. Obama refused to wear a scarf in Saudi Arabia, but they were insulted,' Trump, then a private citizen, tweeted. 'We have enough enemies.' If the lack of headscarves was interpreted on the ground as an insult, it was not apparent." <http://politi.co/2qBzGRs>

-- **KARNI** notes that the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh handed out a list of taboos, which include the thumbs up. Trump loves a thumbs up.

TOP TWEETS -- @PhilipRucker: "Saudis are really pulling out all the stops for Trump. At medal ceremony in grand palace, even junior WH staff are being feted like kings." ... **Stephen Crowley (@Stcro)**: ".@IvankaTrump and Jared Kushner arrive Royal Court Palace. #SaudiArabia" <http://bit.ly/2qESRKt> ... **@JenniferJJacobs**: "Flanking Trump for Saudi Arabia bilateral meeting: Tillerson and Ross. Also at table: Powell, McMaster, Bannon, Priebus, Kushner, Cohn." <http://bit.ly/2r37F6v> ... Mohammed K. Alyahya (**@7yhy**): "The gentleman next to Steve Bannon is Saudi Arabia's Minister of Islamic Affairs Saleh Al Alsheikh" <http://bit.ly/2rCsd34>

HAPPENING TOMORROW -- "In draft of speech, Trump using softer language about Islam," by AP's Vivian Salama and Jonathan Lemire: "President Donald Trump will use his first visit to the Middle East to call for unity in the fight against radicalism in the Muslim world, casting the challenge as a 'battle between good and evil' and urging Arab leaders to 'drive out the terrorists from your places of worship,' according to a draft of the speech obtained by The Associated Press.

"Abandoning some of the harsh anti-Muslim rhetoric of his presidential campaign, the draft of the speech, slated to be delivered in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, envisions new partnerships with America's traditional allies in the Middle East. It notably refrains from mentioning democracy and human rights -- topics Arab leaders often view as U.S. moralizing -- in favor of the more limited goals of peace and stability.

"We are not here to lecture -- to tell other peoples how to live, what to do or who to be. We are here instead to offer partnership in building a better future for us all,' the document said." <http://apne.ws/2q6Hhnw>

TWO BIG LATE FRIDAY SCOOPS ...

NYT -- "Trump Told Russians That Firing 'Nut Job' Comey Eased Pressure From Investigation," by Matt Apuzzo, Maggie Haberman and Matt Rosenberg: "President Trump told Russian officials in the Oval Office this month that firing the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, had relieved 'great pressure' on him, according to a document summarizing the meeting. 'I just fired the head of the F.B.I. He was crazy, a real nut job,' Mr. Trump said, according to the document, which was read to The New York Times by an American official. 'I faced great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off.' Mr. Trump added, 'I'm not under investigation.' ...

"The comments represented an extraordinary moment in the investigation, which centers in part on the administration's contacts with Russian officials: A day after firing the man leading that inquiry, Mr. Trump disparaged him - to Russian officials. The White House document that contained Mr. Trump's comments was based on notes taken from inside the Oval Office and has been circulated as the official account of the meeting. One official read quotations to The Times, and a second official confirmed the broad outlines of the discussion. Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, did not dispute the account." <http://nyti.ms/2pW9rVWY>

WAPO -- "Russia probe reaches current White House official, people familiar with the case say," by Devlin Barrett and Matt Zapotosky: "The law enforcement investigation into possible coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign has identified a current White House official as a significant person of interest, showing that the probe is reaching into the highest levels of government, according to people familiar with the matter. The senior White House adviser under scrutiny by investigators is someone close to the president, according to these people, who would not further identify the official. The revelation comes as the investigation appears to be entering a more overtly active phase, with investigators shifting from work that has remained largely hidden from the public to conducting interviews and using a grand jury to issue

subpoenas. The intensity of the probe is expected to accelerate in the coming weeks, the people said." <http://wapo.st/2pVY15K>

-- THE BIGGEST PARLOR GAME IN TOWN RIGHT NOW: Who is this person the WaPo is describing?

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** JPMorgan Chase believes in the power of data to expand economic opportunity. That's why it helped arm Detroit's leaders with extensive data and expertise to help inform their work and improve efforts underway all across the city. See how they're using this information to make targeted, effective decisions for Detroit: <http://politi.co/2r9j94F> *****

THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR -- "White House looking at ethics rule to weaken special investigation - sources," by Reuters' Julia Edwards Ainsley: "Within hours of Mueller's appointment on Wednesday, the White House began reviewing the Code of Federal Regulations, which restricts newly hired government lawyers from investigating their prior law firm's clients for one year after their hiring ... An executive order signed by Trump in January extended that period to two years. Mueller's former law firm, WilmerHale, represents Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who met with a Russian bank executive in December, and the president's former campaign manager Paul Manafort, who is a subject of a federal investigation. Legal experts said the ethics rule can be waived by the Justice Department, which appointed Mueller. He did not represent Kushner or Manafort directly at his former law firm. If the department did not grant a waiver, Mueller would be barred from investigating Kushner or Manafort, and this could greatly diminish the scope of the probe." <http://reut.rs/2rocR4X>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Comey agrees to testify in a public session at the Senate Intelligence Committee," by Burgess Everett: "Former FBI Director James Comey will get to tell his side of the story behind his abrupt firing -- agreeing to testify in a public session at the Senate Intelligence Committee. The hearing will occur after Memorial Day, committee leaders said on Friday evening." <http://politi.co/2q3BHmw>

-- "Sources: White House lawyers research impeachment," by CNN's Evan Perez: "White House lawyers have begun researching impeachment procedures in an effort to prepare for what officials still believe is a distant possibility that President Donald Trump could have to fend off attempts to remove him from office, two people briefed on the discussions tell CNN. White House officials believe the President has the backing of Republican allies in Congress and that impeachment is not in the cards ... Even Democrats have tried to calm impeachment talk out of concern it is premature. But lawyers in the White House counsel's office have consulted experts in impeachment during the past week and have begun collecting information on how such proceedings would work." <http://cnn.it/2qEGZbq>

-- DARREN SAMUELSON: "West Wing aides brace for big attorney bills: Longstanding conflict-of-interest restrictions limit White House employees from taking free or discounted legal advice, but aides who need lawyers have some options for

getting help": "The last guidance White House staffers had for setting up a legal defense fund dates to the opening of the Clinton era in 1993, though it was updated earlier this month to reflect it's no longer in force. In response to POLITICO, an official at the Office of Government Ethics said it's reviewing its policies on who can legally pay to help Trump aides with their representation in the growing federal investigation."

<http://politi.co/2rogPdR>

ALL NEWS IS LOCAL -- "In hometown of Allendale, James Comey is no 'nut job,' but principled career man," by The Bergen Record's Mike Kelly: "Comey's father turned Trump's harsh opinion of his son against him, calling the president's credibility into question. 'I never was crazy about Trump,' J. Brien Comey, 86, a Republican and a former borough councilman, said in an interview. 'I'm convinced that he's nuts. I thought he belonged in an institution. He was crazy before he became president. Now he's really crazy.' ... Comey's father, a widower who still lives in family's home on a cul-de-sac near the center of town, said that his son did not even call to say Trump had fired him from his FBI post. 'He and I have an unwritten secret agreement that I don't talk about his job,' said J. Brien Comey Sr., who retired as a vice president of the Curtiss-Wright Corp. 'It's just a father-son relationship. We never talk about what he does. I read it in the papers.'

"But the elder Comey, a Republican who served several terms on the Allendale council in the 1990s, was hardly shy about what he thinks of Trump, especially in light of how the president has treated his son. And while Comey voted a straight GOP line in last November's election, he did not cast a vote for any presidential candidate. 'I just couldn't vote for Trump,' he said." <https://njersy.co/2q3HY1C> (h/t Jim Romenesko)

--"Former FBI head well liked at bagel shop," by Westport News' Chris Marquette: "A little shop in the Westport Plaza Shopping Center on the Post Road, Village Bagels is known for its sandwiches, its coffee and, unsurprisingly, its bagels. It is less well known as a go-to breakfast spot for former FBI director James Comey. Back when Comey lived in town and worked for the largest hedge fund in the world, he and his family were weekend regulars at the small Westport eatery. ... Comey sold his Westport house earlier this year for \$2.47 million." <http://bit.ly/2qliat5>

SCOOP -- "Trump tells advisers he wants to end key Obamacare subsidies," by Josh Dawsey, Jen Haberkorn and Paul Demko: "President Donald Trump has told advisers he wants to end payments of key Obamacare subsidies, a move that could send the health law's insurance markets into a tailspin, according to several sources familiar with the conversations. Many advisers oppose the move because they worry it would backfire politically if people lose their insurance or see huge premium spikes and blame the White House, the sources said. Trump has said that the bold move could force Congressional Democrats to the table to negotiate an Obamacare replacement. ...

"Trump told aides in a Tuesday Oval Office meeting that he wants to end the payments to insurers because he doesn't gain anything by continuing them, according to a senior White House adviser. 'Why the hell would we?' he asked about continuing

the payments, according to the adviser. Trump added that if Congress wants the subsidies, lawmakers would find a way to pay for them." <http://politi.co/2rCZEIh>

JEB THROWING SHADE -- "Jeb Bush on Trump: I predicted a chaos president," by CNN's Matt Egan in Las Vegas: "Jeb Bush just gave the political equivalent of an 'I told you so' to President Donald Trump. 'When I ran for office, I said he is a chaos candidate and would be a chaos president,' Bush said on Friday. 'Unfortunately, so far chaos organizes the presidency right now,' he said, speaking at the annual SALT hedge fund conference, which is headlined by bigwigs from the world of politics, finance, sports and entertainment.

"Bush said it appears the Trump administration is 'living in the tyranny of the moment' instead of 'executing on a clear agenda.' Even though Bush acknowledged he's not on Trump's 'speed dial,' the former 2016 GOP rival of the president offered some unsolicited advice for calming things down in the White House. 'Stop tweeting,' Bush said. The former Florida governor and Republican presidential candidate acknowledged there are benefits to Trump's Twitter habit, including bypassing the media to get his message directly to millions of people. But Bush warned that Trump's tweetstorms give 'our enemies all sorts of nuances and insights' into the mind of the commander in chief." <http://cnn.it/2rC4Zd6>

FLOTUS WATCH -- "Melania scours media to protect Trump," by Tara Palmeri: "Melania Trump's spent her first few months as first lady in New York, only rarely appearing in Washington or speaking at events. Yet friends and aides say she's keeping a close watch from her gilded apartment in Trump Tower on how her husband is portrayed in the press-and that she's growing increasingly worried about the anonymous sniping from West Wing staff.

"Like President Donald Trump, these people said, Melania Trump is an avid consumer of cable news, and often tracks the news of the day and will alert her husband to stories she thinks make him look bad. She has raised concerns that some on his communications and press team aren't doing enough to defend him, according to aides and sources close to the president. She's been especially troubled by background quotes in which West Wing aides criticize the president, and she's called the president to discuss it." <http://politi.co/2qBLRxJ>

THE JUICE ...

-- AMBASSADOR WATCH: CALLISTA GINGRICH will be nominated to be ambassador to the Vatican. **K.T. MCFARLAND** will be nominated to to be ambassador to Singapore.

-- SCHOCK UPDATE: Former Illinois Republican Rep. Aaron Schock's trial date was pushed back until Jan. 12, 2018.

-- **THE RNC** is reporting it raised \$9.6 million in April and has raised \$51 million this year.

OUR FAULT! The Trump-Israel logo is "EVER STRONGER" not "EVEN STRONGER" *The logo ...* <http://bit.ly/2qBE5nP> **DEMOCRATIC** operatives pointed out to Playbook how closely that slogan hues to Hillary Clinton's "Stronger Together."

--**@ElizLanders**: "Outside of the White House press hotel painted in the parking lot: 'Together we're better'" <http://bit.ly/2qBFmek>

Playbook Reads

THE PREAKNESS STAKES is 6:45 tonight on NBC.

OBAMA'S LIFE -- "Dolce vita! The Obamas arrive in Tuscany on a private plane escorted by six fighter jets and a 13-car motorcade for five days in a \$15k-a-night private villa" -- 24 pix on one page <http://dailym.ai/2q6pU68>

SUSAN GLASSER in **POLITICO Magazine**, "'People Here Think Trump Is a Laughingstock': On the president's ill-timed world tour": "When European diplomats meet these days, they often swap stories about Trump-and how to manage their volatile new ally. 'The president of the United States has a 12-second attention span,' NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told a former senior official in April after meeting Trump in the Oval Office. Not only that, this person told me, the president seemed unprepared and ill-informed, turning the conversation to North Korea and apparently unaware that NATO is not a part of the ongoing North Korea saga." <http://politi.co/2pVUG6O>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Iranians demanding change deliver emphatic victory for Rouhani," by Reuters' Parisa Hafezi in Dubai and Babak Dehghanpisheh in Beirut: "Iranians yearning for more freedom at home and less isolation abroad have emphatically re-elected President Hassan Rouhani, throwing down a challenge to the conservative clergy that still holds ultimate sway. Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli declared Rouhani's victory on Saturday on state TV, citing figures giving Rouhani about 57 percent of the vote in Friday's election, compared to 38 percent for his main rival, hardline judge Ebrahim Raisi. Although the powers of the elected president are limited by those of unelected Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who outranks him, the scale of Rouhani's victory gives the pro-reform camp a strong mandate to seek the sort of change that hardliners have thwarted for decades." <http://reut.rs/2rCcxwN>

TRUMP'S FLYNN OBSESSION -- "Trump told aides firing Flynn was a mistake," by Josh Dawsey: "Two days after firing Michael Flynn as his national security adviser in February, President Donald Trump told several aides and friends he should have kept

him instead. ... 'I was kind of stunned,' one person said. 'I asked him. You fired him already. What are you going to do?' Trump has grown obsessed with defending the tough-talking 58-year old general, repeatedly telling aides and associates in private that Flynn was a 'good man.' One adviser close to Trump said he's heard Trump defend the general using the exact words described in reports of memos written by former FBI director James Comey recording his conversations with the president - and that Trump has told people inside the White House he wished the investigation would go away."

<http://politi.co/2r34coO>

--"Russian officials bragged they could use Flynn to influence Trump, sources say," by CNN's Gloria Borger, Pamela Brown, Jim Sciutto, Marshall Cohen and Eric Lichtblau: <http://cnn.it/2royAtz>

THE FAMILY - "How to Woo Chinese Investors: With Visa Offers and the Trump Name," by NYT's Javier C. Hernandez in Beijing and Jesse Drucker in New York: "For Chinese citizens, American green cards can be notoriously difficult to obtain. But a Beijing immigration company called Qiaowai tells visa applicants of a secret weapon: It is working on behalf of a real estate firm owned by the family of President Trump's son-in-law and adviser, Jared Kushner. 'They said the president would make sure it came through,' said Lu Ling, a technology executive in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. 'They said there was no chance it could fail.' As it builds two luxury apartment buildings in Jersey City, the Kushner family is trying to raise \$150 million from Chinese investors through the so-called EB-5 program, which offers visas in exchange for a \$500,000 investment." <http://nyti.ms/2rohlbE>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** In order to create more opportunities for Detroiters to secure well-paying jobs, JPMorgan Chase worked to boost the city's workforce readiness, and today, there are clear signs of progress. Nearly 15,000 Detroiters, young people and adults, have participated in job skills training programs and received career and technical education. Learn more about the impact of retooling Detroit's workforce: <http://politi.co/2raEMIX> *****

MEDIAWATCH - MSNBC's WATERGATE AD -- MSNBC is airing an ad featuring Chris Hayes at the Watergate in D.C. that ties this current moment to what happened during President Richard Nixon's scandal. The ad was shot in mid-April in D.C. and is part of the MSNBC's "This Is Who We Are" campaign. They're airing the spot across NBC platforms and non-NBC Universal TV channels and digital pre-roll. Aaron Taylor, CMO of NBC News and MSNBC, told us the ad "was a little prescient that we were out in front" before everyone else started making Watergate comparisons. He said they'll continue airing the ad as long as it's relevant. **See the ad** <http://bit.ly/2qHM2px>

CLICKER - "The nation's cartoonists on the week in politics," edited by Matt Wuerker - **14 keepers** <http://politi.co/2qz71MW>

GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Why We Lie: The Science Behind Our Deceptive Ways,"** by Yudhijit Bhattacharjee on the cover of June's NatGeo: "Honesty may be the best policy, but scheming and dishonesty are part of what makes us human." <http://on.natgeo.com/2qzE4jF> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2q4FKOF>

--**"My Family's Slave,"** by Alex Tizon on the cover of June's Atlantic: "She lived with us for 56 years. She raised me and my siblings without pay. I was 11, a typical American kid, before I realized who she was." <http://theatln.tc/2rmx5f6>

--**"His Kampf,"** by Graeme Wood in June's Atlantic: "Richard Spencer is a troll and an icon for white supremacists. He was also my high-school classmate." <http://theatln.tc/2rA8Yaq>

--**"Conventional Artillery and Nuclear Missiles in North Korea,"** by Eric Rasmusen in Real Clear Defense: "If the South bombs Pyong-yang, the North responds by nuking Seoul, a calamity for both but yielding revenge for the North. Thus, Seoul will not bomb Pyong-yang and its threat evaporates. If the threat evaporates, North Korea is free to bombard Seoul. Since North Korea now has a credible threat to bombard Seoul, South Korea will pay the \$20 billion, and since South Korea will do that, North Korea will issue the threat that starts the process." <http://bit.ly/2qFYHsX>

--**"What Animals Taught Me About Being Human,"** by Helen MacDonald in tomorrow's N.Y. Times Magazine: "Surrounding myself with animals to feel less alone was a mistake: The greatest comfort is in knowing their lives are not about us at all." <http://nyti.ms/2rmvTZc>

--**"The Only Good Muslim Is a Dead Muslim,"** by Ted Genoways in The New Republic: "A meatpacking town in Kansas opened its doors to Somali refugees. Then a group of Trump supporters plotted to kill them after Election Day." <http://bit.ly/2rm8PKi>

--**"The Personal-Essay Boom is Over,"** by Jia Tolentino in The New Yorker: "[T]here's a specific sort of ultra-confessional essay, written by a person you've never heard of and published online, that flourished until recently and now hardly registers. The change has happened quietly, but it's a big one: a genre that partially defined the last decade of the Internet has essentially disappeared." <http://bit.ly/2rmrtl4> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"Enemies For Ever,"** by James Wolcott in the London Review of Books, reviewing "Making It," by Norman Podhoretz: "Four years later, Norman Podhoretz published a memoir entitled, yes, Making It, a book that would live in notoriety, which at least beats total obscurity. It was, and is, that rarity, a thesis-driven memoir. Its thesis was that success had replaced sex as the Lawrentian 'dirty little secret' of American life in the 1960s, and nowhere was that dirty secret more deeply closeted than in the birdcage bosoms of his fellow critics, professors and public intellectuals with their snooty, puritan pretensions." <http://bit.ly/2q4tZaZ>

--**"A Foreign Intelligence Analyst Report on President Trump,"** by Nada Bakos and

Dennis Gleeson in Lawfare: "In our previous jobs as CIA analysts, we wrote analyses on foreign countries, leaders, and other political figures for senior U.S. policymakers like the President and a small number of Cabinet-level officials. ... We've attempted to approximate the types of information foreign analysts would be likely to include, as well as the nature in which such information might be characterized." <http://bit.ly/2pU2aqI>

--"**The Dictator's Team**," by Steve Fainaru in ESPN the Magazine: "Backed by FIFA's tacit support, Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria has woven soccer into its grisly campaign of oppression, tearing apart a generation of players." <http://es.pn/2rAe05B> (h/t Longform.org)

--"**A Parliament of Owls**," by Robert O. Paxton in the N.Y. Review of Books: "They are impressive killing machines, capable of dispatching other birds or animals larger than themselves. Central to this are big legs and claws, wing feathers designed for silent flight, and highly sensitive eyes and ears. Since owls have the night pretty much to themselves, they have evolved into a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and behaviours. Colour is their least variable aspect. They come mostly in cryptic browns and greys, since plumage matters less for courtship than for concealment." <http://bit.ly/2r0Kyth>

--"**What happened when Kiss went to Moscow: bullet-proof tents, rivalries and mating rituals**," by Kate Mossman in The New Statesman: Nothing can prepare you for the Kiss make-up transformation in the flesh, and the psychological shift it occasions in both onlooker and band. One by one a series of giant seven-foot space clowns emerges, each with a look of surprise on its face. High up the door frame of Stanley's dressing room peers a face like a sad mime, one eye a black star, red lips pulled into a feminine pout." <http://bit.ly/2r0yoRw>

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- Sen. Rob Portman on a flight from Cincinnati to Atlanta, sitting in Delta Comfort ... Bret Baier on a United flight to Paris last night from Dulles ... Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker sitting courtside at the Celtics game last night.

TRANSITIONS -- **Dustin Walker** has been named as a professional staff member covering Europe, Russia, Central Asia and Afghanistan for the Senate Armed Services Committee. He previously was the committee's communications director. **Rachel Hoff** is the new communications director for the committee. She is an alum of American Action Forum, the Foreign Policy Initiative and Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas). ...

... **Will Levi** has joined as an associate at Sidley Austin's Supreme Court and Appellate and Commercial Litigation and Disputes practices. He previously was chief counsel on Senate Judiciary for Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah). ... **George Ross Parman** is joining Altria Group as a manager on their communications team. He previously was a director at kglobal.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- CAA'S DARNELL STROM and his wife Emily gave birth to a son, Sterling Monroe Strom. They are home resting in Los Angeles. (h/t Adler)

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Mike Reilly, partner and political ad man at MVAR Media, turned 31 ... Crosby Armstrong, COS to Alex Slater at the Clyde Group and a Podesta Group alum

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Craig Melvin , NBC News' "Weekend TODAY" co-anchor, TODAY national correspondent and MSNBC anchor. How he's celebrating: "I will be celebrating with a producer and some colleagues in the country of Jordan as I join Amb. Nikki Haley on her first international trip in her role as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Tune-in to 'TODAY' on Monday for more on the trip." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2royTVf>

BIRTHDAYS: Walter Isaacson is 65 ... Pulitzer Prize winning presidential historian Jon Meacham, the pride of Chattanooga, EVP and executive editor at Random House, is 48 ... Politico alum Tom McGeeveran ... Christina Bellantoni, LAT AME for politics; former Roll Call, PBS, and TPM; celebrating with baby Maxwell Jialong and husband Patrick (hat tip: Ben Chang) ... George Condon ... Mary Bruce ... Phil Elliott of TIME (we jumped the gun yesterday) ... Lynn Parrish (h/t Jon Haber) ... Phil Alongi, a proud Jersey boy ... Cassie Smedile, comms director for Sen. Todd Young ... Landon David ... Ron Reagan is 59 ... former New York Gov. David Paterson is 63 ... Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) is 66 ... CSIS' Wally Adeyemo ... Stacy Day, senior manager of media and external comms at the U.S. Chamber (h/t Blair Latoff Holmes) ... Burson-Marsteller's Katie Lewallen - an alum of American Bridge, Sen. Landrieu and Rep. Quigley -- celebrating a milestone birthday before moving out to Burson's LA office ... WaPo's Amber Phillips ... author Francine Segal ... Davey Ahearn ... Gabriel Muller ... Justin Portes, analyst at Aristeia Capital ... Jessica González-Rojas ... CNN Politics' Daniella Diaz, a Politico alum ... Michael Oren, former Israeli ambassador to the US (2009-2013), now a member of Knesset, is 62 ... Gil Kaufman, senior policy advisor at the FBI, is 4-0 (hubby tip: Scott Mahaskey) ... AP investigative reporter Chad Day (h/t Sarah Wire) ... former Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WVa.) is 68 ... former Rep. Harold Ford (D-Tenn.) is 72 ...

... **Helen Brosnan** , organizer at Rise To Run and co-founder of OWN IT ... Delaware Gov. John Carney is 61 ... Alex Gambal ... Bhav Tibrewal, deputy political director at the Hotel Trades Council ... Julie Reichenberger ... Hannah Cheney of U.S. News and World Report (hubby tip: Kyle) ... Margery Kraus, founder and executive chairman of APCO Worldwide ... Bill Pierce, senior director at APCO Worldwide's health care practice and former HHS spokesman (h/ts Anthony DeAngelo) ... Rep. Chris Collins (R-NY) is 67 ... Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC) is 48 ... Politico's Caitlin Haggerty Kestermann and Rebecca Morin ... Henry Goldman, NYC City Hall reporter for Bloomberg News ... Andy Newbold ... Ami Copeland, executive director of Business Forward ... Aylon Berger, national chair of the High School Democrats of America, is 17 ... Lauren Wolman ... Danny Herrera ... Clayton Hall ... Kori Anderson ... Alan "Big Al" Madison ... PJ Hoffman ... Deborah Lehr Rogers ... David Martin, JMart and Jeremy's Dad, and a

loyal Playbooker ... Erin Kelly ... Sara Severs ... Andrew Harrison ... Rosiland Jordan ... Brian Darling ... Pete D'Alessandro ... Matt Solberg ... Melissa Mulliken ... Bruce Collick ... Carrie Lynch Springer ... Allison Goldberg ... Kathy Giles ... Amy Leveton ... Ethan Rosenzweig (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Marie Robey Wood ... Sarah Gilbert Fox ... Bill Broadway ... Jonathan Thompson ... Cher is 71 ... Busta Rhymes is 45 (h/ts AP

THE SHOWS, by @MattMackowiak, filing from D.C.:

-- **"Fox News Sunday"**: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ... Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). Panel: Fox News Brit Hume, former Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), Kimberley Strassel and Juan Williams ... "Power Player of the Week" segment with singer-songwriter Judy Collins

-- **ABC's "This Week"**: National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster ... Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) ... Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) ... Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) Panel: Stephanie Cutter, Matthew Dowd, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Newsmax CEO Christopher Ruddy

-- **CBS's "Face the Nation"** : Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) ... Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) ... new CBS News Nation Tracker poll with CBS News elections director Anthony Salvanto ... Jan Crawford and Jeff Pegues. Panel: Ed O'Keefe, Molly Ball, David Ignatius and Ramesh Ponnuru

-- **CNN's "State of the Union"**: Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) ... Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). Panel: Former Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), Jen Psaki, Farah Pandith, Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) and Bakari Sellers

-- **NBC's "Meet the Press"**: Preempted for English Premier League coverage

-- **CNN's "Inside Politics"** with John King: Panel: Carl Hulse, Karen Tumulty, Manu Raju and Nia-Malika Henderson

-- **CNN's "Reliable Sources"** : CBS News political contributor Bob Schieffer ... Bill Kristol and Salena Zito ... The Baltimore Sun's David Zurawik and author Nicole Hemmer ... The Washington Post's Scott Wilson ... Seth Rich family spokesman Brad Bauman

-- **Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures"**: Former CIA Director James Woolsey ... Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) ... Ben Bernanke ... former Whitewater Investigation head of the office of independent counsel Robert Ray. Panel: Mercedes Schlapp and Matt Schlapp

-- **Fox News' "MediaBuzz"**: IJR's Erin McPike ... Townhall's Guy Benson ... former PBS Newshour anchor Ray Suarez ... The Washington Examiner's Susan Ferrechio ... Fox News senior political analyst Brit Hume ... The Hollywood Reporter's Marisa Guthrie ... The Hill's Joe Conacha ... Fox News' John Roberts

-- **CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS"**: Panel: Elliott Abrams, Brookings Institution senior fellow and Johns Hopkins University's Vali Nasr, The New Yorker's Robin Wright and The New York Times' Thomas Erdbrink. Panel: David Frum, author Ronald Kessler and author and Bret Stephens

-- **Univision's "Al Punto"** : White House director of policy and interagency coordination Carlos Diaz-Rosillo ... former leader of the Paramilitary Self-Defense Group José Manuel Mireles ... Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar López Rivera and Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-Ill.) ... musician Miguel Bosé ... "El Chapo" star Marco de la O

-- **C-SPAN: "The Communicators"**: FTC Commissioner Terrell McSweeney (D), questioned by Axios' David McCabe ... **"Newsmakers"** : Rep. Jim Langevin (D-R.I.), questioned by Politico's Tim Starks and CQ Roll Call's John Donnelly ... **"Q&A"**: Author T.R. Reid

-- **Washington Times' "Mack on Politics"** weekly politics podcast with Matt Mackowiak (download on iTunes, Google Play, or Stitcher or listen at <http://bit.ly/2r37J6h>): Author and Harvard Law School's Alan Dershowitz.

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***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** With more than \$50 million invested in community development efforts in Detroit, JPMorgan Chase has helped leverage an additional \$147 million in outside capital to revitalize Detroit's neighborhoods - creating or preserving more than 800 units of housing, 800 jobs and 176,000 square feet of commercial space. Learn more: <http://politi.co/2qBfEaT> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Energy
Sent: Wed 6/14/2017 2:05:35 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Energy: Ethanol waiver battle royale set for today — EPA seeks two-year halt of methane rule — LNG exporters keep an eye on Qatar

By Anthony Adragna | 06/14/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff, Darius Dixon, Alex Guillén, Nick Juliano and Annie Snider

E15 DAY! The ethanol community has been looking forward to today with heady anticipation, as one of their most prized policy goals will get a day in the Senate spotlight: Sen. Deb Fischer's bill that would expand sales of 15 percent ethanol will get a hearing before the EPW Committee. The hearing is part of a deal, which also includes a committee vote, struck between Fischer and Chairman John Barrasso in order to win corn-state senators' support for an (ultimately unsuccessful) resolution to strike down an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions.

Here's what will happen: Ethanol issues cut across party lines, so the usual partisan bickering will likely be absent. Instead, expect support from corn-staters on both sides of the aisle like Fischer, Joni Ernst and Tammy Duckworth and skepticism from both fossil fuel defenders and environmentalists. The panel is as good an indication as any: Brooke Coleman, who leads the Advanced Biofuels Business Council, will join Mike Lorenz, executive vice president for Sheetz, the leading E15 retailer, in facing off with Todd Teske, who runs small engine maker Briggs and Stratton, and Jonathan Lewis, senior counsel for the Clean Air Task Force. Scientific input will be provided by Janet Yanowitz, a consultant at EcoEngineering who has worked with NREL scientists on studies, though at least a couple of them were commissioned by the Renewable Fuels Association.

If you go: Senators kick off the hearing at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

Volumes imminent? As if an E15 hearing wasn't enough excitement, ME has been hearing rumblings that EPA will issue a proposed rule setting the amount of ethanol required to be in the fuel system this week. No date is set.

KICKING THE CAN ON CATCHING METHANE LEAKS: Undeterred by litigation seeking to block even an initial 90-day stay of the Obama-era regulations, EPA proposed Tuesday a two-year pause on key methane leak detection and repair requirements for new oil and gas wells, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. The agency must now go through the formal rulemaking process and will accept public comment for 30 days on its proposal. Its final decision will without a doubt be challenged in court. Link to the proposal here.

EPA estimated that companies subject to the rule would save at least \$172 million, but acknowledged that would come at the expense of "associated climate and human health benefits" that would not materialize. The Trump administration said it did not have a dollar figure available for those lost health benefits over the next two years. Under the Obama administration, EPA estimated the methane rule would lead to "monetized benefits" of about \$360 million in 2020, although it said that figure did not account for all benefits of reduced emissions and could

vary widely based on modeling assumptions.

Environmentalists assailed the proposed delay. "Just the other week, Pruitt himself noted the threat posed by methane pollution, but he's purposefully allowing people across the country to suffer from it," Sierra Club Chief Climate Counsel Joanne Spalding said in a statement. "This isn't simply mean-spirited, it's a deliberate attempt to benefit the oil and gas industry at the expense of our public health."

WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and House Science's Kristina Baum was first to identify Hawaii as the state that's gone longest without a Republican senator. For today: Who was the last sitting president to testify before Congress? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HIDDEN U.S. ENERGY OPPORTUNITY? The ongoing dispute between Qatar - the world's top LNG producer - and some of its neighbors may ultimately offer an opportunity for U.S. exporters of liquefied natural gas to expand their market share, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). "I don't think the administration intended to impact U.S. LNG by giving the Saudis more of a green light when it comes to Qatar," David Goldwyn, a former State Department energy staffer, said. "But now that you add this geopolitical risk, that will help those looking to sell commitments later." While the U.S. exports a relatively tiny amount of LNG today, it is on track to become one of the world's largest suppliers in just a few years.

In other LNG news, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has been pushing European Union officials to reject a new Russian natural gas pipeline in favor of U.S. liquefied natural gas supplies, he told Senators at a budget hearing Tuesday. Pro's Eric Wolff [has more](#).

RESPECTFUL DISAGREEMENT: Tillerson told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at an earlier hearing Tuesday that his view the U.S. should stick with the Paris climate agreement "didn't change" but said he respected Trump's decision to abandon the pact. "My views were heard out," he said in response to a question from ranking member [Ben Cardin](#). "I respect that the president heard my views, but I respect the decision he's taken."

QUOTABLE TRUMP: "Your island has been there for hundreds of years, and I believe your island will be there for hundreds more," President Donald Trump told Tangier Island Mayor James "Ooker" Eskridge, downplaying the threat climate change and erosion pose to the Virginia community, according to [Delmarva Now](#), which points out the island is losing up to 16 feet of land per year. The New York Times observed last year that the island's residents are in danger of [becoming](#) "some of the first climate-change refugees in the continental United States" within the next half-century.

APPROPRIATORS MOVING WITH STATUS QUO: Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) said Tuesday afternoon that he has instructed appropriators to rely on spending limits from fiscal 2017 as they write their bills for 2018, our budget colleague Sarah Ferris [reports](#). "[W]e hope to move forward with some of the appropriations bills at last year's levels, and then adjust them once we can reach a bipartisan agreement on how much we're going to spend," he

told reporters. McConnell appears to be laying the groundwork for a continuing resolution, which many Republicans already anticipate.

Halfway through June, appropriators in the House still don't know how big a slice of the taxpayer pie they're going to get, and there's no telling how soon the Budget Committee will get them a number. That, along with the lack of nominees from the Trump administration, is slowing the process, according to energy and water appropriations cardinal [Mike Simpson](#). "The problem is you could have a hearing on environmental management. Uh oh! They don't have an [assistant] secretary for environmental management... That makes it all kinda tough," Simpson told ME. The Idaho Republican's subcommittee has scheduled a budget hearing next Tuesday with Energy Secretary Rick Perry, the only Senate-confirmed Trump official at the Energy Department.

NUCLEAR, OZONE, BROWNFIELD BILLS LINED UP FOR ACTION: Rep. [John Shimkus](#) has queued up three bills for his environment panel of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to vote on Thursday, including the Illinois Republican's legislation to rewrite the nation's nuclear waste policy. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act hasn't been amended in 30 years, when Yucca Mountain was picked to be the sole waste repository, and Shimkus' bill first had a hearing seven weeks ago. The [draft version](#) of the bill includes sections on interim storage sites, payments to the host state and limits work on any defense waste-only repository but keeps the focus on completing Yucca's licensing process. Shimkus included a few Nevada-friendly provisions, but it's largely been a nonstarter with the state's congressional delegation.

The committee will also vote on H.R. 806, the [Ozone Standards Implementation Act](#), which would delay through 2025 implementation of the 2015 ozone standard, stretch the regular air quality standard review period from five years to ten, and adds new technology and economic considerations for future standards. The House passed a similar bill last year. Lawmakers will also take up a bill making changes to EPA's brownfields program, which redevelops abandoned factories, gas stations and other facilities. The changes include allowing grants to be used for multiple purposes and bumping grant limits from \$200,000 to \$500,000, although Democrats have been pushing to increase overall appropriations to the program. The markup is set for 10 a.m. Thursday in Rayburn 2123.

PARTY, INTERRUPTED: Environmental activists opposed to new pipelines in Virginia interrupted Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam's victory party after he [defeated](#) former Rep. Tom Perriello for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, according to [video](#) posted by NBC4's Julie Carey. National green groups heavily favored Perriello in the primary. On the Republican side, former RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie survived a shockingly close call to claim the GOP gubernatorial nomination.

REPUBLICANS URGE OVERSIGHT RESPONSIVENESS: Lest it be lost in Tuesday's EPW consideration of four nominees, Barrasso reiterated the expectation that federal agencies respond to oversight requests from all committee members. "I'm going to work to ensure that the executive branch agencies under the current administration work diligently and expeditiously to respond to the committee's reasonable oversight requests," Barrasso said. But he argued EPA has actually been quite responsive to date, answering 386 of the 416 letters received.

Crunching the numbers: EPA told ME it had responded to 11 of the letters sent by ranking member Tom Carper so far seeking responses. Carper's staff, though, contends they've had just six adequate responses - highlighting one letter that consisted only of press releases and other public documents as an example of non-responsive correspondence - to the 17 Carper-led letters they've sent so far.

It's not just senators though: House Resources Chairman Rob Bishop told reporters "obviously" federal agencies should respond to members of both parties, though he - like Barrasso during the hearing - noted the Obama administration frequently provided slow or inadequate responses. "I would hope members of parties would be responsible enough that it's not a fishing expedition," Bishop said. "There is a better way of interacting between administrations and the legislative body."

TIRED OF WAITING: Senior Republicans are increasingly concerned the president's slow pace of filling energy and environmental posts may impede his ability to enact his agenda. Barrasso told ME in particular he'd like to see Trump nominate officials to run the Fish & Wildlife Service, BLM and National Park Service. "I would like see more names coming out," Barrasso said.

ANY TIME TO STOP FOR LOBSTER? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is in Maine today and tomorrow where he'll tour the controversial Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument by car, foot, and canoe. That's one of nearly two dozen national monuments designations the Trump administration is reviewing. A number of Republicans in the state, led by Gov. Paul LePage, are calling for the Obama-era designation to be undone.

As Zinke heads to Maine, the League of Conservation Voters and a group of Democratic lawmakers will announce a new campaign aimed at defending public lands from congressional and executive branch actions. Participants in the noon press conference in the House Triangle are Sens. Martin Heinrich and Brian Schatz, as well as Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Salud Carbajal, Judy Chu, Raúl Grijalva, Donald McEachin, Tom O'Halleran and Raul Ruiz.

REPORT: HOW POWER PRODUCERS STACK UP ON EMISSIONS: CERES is out with a report this morning analyzing air emissions of the 100 largest U.S. electric power producers. Among its findings: Power plant sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions in 2015 were 87 percent and 79 percent lower, respectively, than in 1990 and carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector have declined 20 percent between 2005 and 2015.

ANOTHER TITLE FOR BROWN: California Gov. Jerry Brown has been named special adviser for states and regions for this year's U.N. climate conference in Fiji. "California is proud to partner with Fiji, an island nation that is experiencing firsthand the impacts of climate change," he said in a statement.

CRAMER'S WORRY AFTER PARIS PULLOUT: Rep. Kevin Cramer told ME he did worry some U.S. companies - coal giants, GE and Microsoft, in particular - would face some blowback for the U.S. pulling out of the Paris agreement. "When you have big companies in a global

market, it's good for them to feel the support of the government," he said. "Not being at the accord makes it more difficult." Cramer said he understood the president's decision to pull out, citing potential legal risks compelling the U.S. to regulate emissions domestically, but also thought the U.S. could successfully negotiate its way back into the pact.

MORE CRIMINAL CHARGES IN FLINT WATER DISASTER: Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette has scheduled a press conference for this morning, with local press reporting that more criminal charges for "names that will be recognized" are in the works. So far, Schuette - who is widely expected to enter the 2018 gubernatorial race this summer - has charged 13 individuals in the crisis that exposed the city's 100,000 residents to unsafe levels of lead, including two former emergency managers.

MAIL CALL! DEETS SOUGHT ON MONUMENT REVIEW: Grijalva sent a letter to Zinke Tuesday seeking information on his travel itinerary and meeting schedule on recent trips to national monuments currently under review. He also asked Zinke to provide a tally and summary of public comments received to date.

MOVERS, SHAKERS: The Edison Electric Institute announced Tuesday PNM Resources' Pat Vincent-Collawn will serve as chairman of the board; Exelon's Chris Crane, Berkshire Hathaway Energy's Greg Abel and Duke Energy's Lynn Good will be vice chairmen. It also announced Phil Moeller, former FERC commissioner, will be promoted from senior vice president to executive vice president.

QUICK HITS

- Global demand for coal falls in 2016 for second year in a row. The Guardian.
- Keystone XL pipeline would imperil whooping cranes, natural resources, experts for Sierra Club and Bold Nebraska say. Omaha World-Herald.
- The first new US coal mine of the Trump era will employ fewer people than an average supermarket. Quartz.
- U.S. will have to work with others to deny North Korea fuel supplies -Tillerson. Reuters.
- Oil Slips as Industry Said to Report Surprise U.S. Supply Build. Bloomberg.
- EPA Research Office Deputizes House Science Committee Aide. Bloomberg BNA.

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/14/ethanol-waiver-battle-royale-set-for-today-220828>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:43:34 PM
Subject: RE: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

I actually like "our" here

From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:40 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

Change "our" to "the"

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 19, 2017, at 11:37 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Cc: Palich, Christian[palich.christian@epa.gov]; Frye, Tony (Robert)[frye.robert@epa.gov]
From: Lyons, Troy
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:15:17 PM
Subject: FW: Letter to Administrator Pruitt
2017 12 19 Scott Pruitt Definers.pdf

FYI

From: Ferrato, Margaret (Whitehouse) [mailto:Margaret_Ferrato@whitehouse.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 11:10 AM
To: Lyons, Troy <lyons.troy@epa.gov>
Cc: Dudis, Dan (Whitehouse) <Dan_Dudis@whitehouse.senate.gov>; Gaeta, Joe (Whitehouse) <Joe_Gaeta@whitehouse.senate.gov>
Subject: Letter to Administrator Pruitt

Hello Troy,

I hope you're well! Attached is a letter to Administrator Pruitt from Senators Whitehouse and Harris. Don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions.

Best,
Maggie

Margaret Ferrato

Associate Legislative Assistant

Office of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

530 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

(202) 224-6564

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

We are writing you to express our concerns about the decision by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award a \$120,000 no-bid contract for “news analysis” to Definers Public Affairs, as reported this week by *Mother Jones*¹ and the *New York Times*.² EPA’s contract with Definers risks further politicizing the agency and is another instance of EPA under your tenure becoming captured by the industry it regulates.³ At a minimum, it presents an appearance of impropriety to which you as Administrator should never be a party. For the reasons that follow, you should terminate this contract immediately.

Definers shares an address and staff with America Rising, a political action committee (PAC) that has been described as the “unofficial research arm of the Republican party.”⁴ America Rising has branded itself as an organization on the right founded “for the sole purpose of exposing the truth about Democrats through video tracking, research, and communications.”⁵ The group spends its time attacking Democrats, progressives, and environmentalists and lists Definers as one of its largest vendors.⁶ America Rising also operates the 501(c)(4) organization America Rising Squared, a dark money organization whose contributors are anonymous. The leadership teams of America Rising and Definers share numerous individuals. For example, Definers’ founder, Matt Rhoades, also founded America Rising.⁷ Definers’ president, Joe Pounder, is also the president of America Rising.⁸ Definers’ Senior Vice President, Brian Rogers, is also the executive director of America Rising Squared.⁹ These organizations may

¹ “The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press Activity,” *Mother Jones*, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/12/the-epa-hired-a-major-republican-opposition-research-firm-to-track-press-activity/>

² “E.P.A. Contractor Has Spent Past Year Scouring the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/15/us/politics/epa-scott-pruitt-foia.html>

³ “How Rollbacks at Scott Pruitt’s E.P.A. Are a Boon to Oil and Gas,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/20/business/energy-environment/devon-energy.html>; “Under Trump, E.P.A. Has Slowed Actions Against Polluters, and Put Limits on Enforcement Officers,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/10/us/politics/pollution-epa-regulations.html>

⁴ “Political Operatives Find Demand for Their Skills in Business World,” *The Wall Street Journal*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/political-operatives-find-demand-for-their-skills-in-business-world-1462136874>

⁵ America Rising, <https://americarisingpac.org/about-us/>

⁶ America Rising PAC Expenditures (2018), Open Secrets.org, <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/expenditures.php?cmte=C00542902&cycle=2018>

⁷ Matt Rhoades, Definers, <https://www.definersdc.com/matt-rhoades>

⁸ Joe Pounder, Definers, <https://www.definersdc.com/joe-pounder>

⁹ Brian Rogers, Definers, <https://www.definersdc.com/brian-rogers>

have different corporate forms, but we should all be clear that they are merely different parts of the same multi-faceted partisan operation. Any claim they are distinct is a sham.

What's more, America Rising and Definers receive significant funds from interests in the energy sector as well as other industries you regulate as EPA Administrator. While this cabal of Republican opposition research and electioneering organizations can raise much of its money anonymously so that the identities of many of its donors are unknown to the public, press reports about Definers' work and Federal Election Commission (FEC) disclosures from the America Rising PAC make it abundantly clear that companies you regulate are driving much of its work. Definers was hired by fossil fuel interests to work on opposing a local ballot initiative in Colorado that would have placed conditions on oil and gas drilling.¹⁰ America Rising has received sizeable donations from several companies and individuals affiliated with the energy industry, including Hilcorp Energy, L.E. Simmons of SCF Partners, and Jonathon Barrett of Luminus Management LLC. It has also received donations from companies and individuals in other industries regulated by EPA, including Susan Groff of Northwest Excavating, William Kunkler of CC Industries (manufacturing), George Daniels of Daniels Manufacturing, and Jerry Langer of Langer Transport.¹¹

Many of these same corporate interests vocally supported your nomination and confirmation as EPA Administrator. America Rising even ran a campaign in support of your confirmation as EPA Administrator which included ads urging senators to vote for your confirmation and the website, www.ConfirmPruitt.com.¹² At your confirmation hearing, Senator Whitehouse asked you the following question for the record, which has renewed relevance in light of recent events:

Q 138. Please provide any correspondence or details about other communication between you or anyone working on your behalf concerning the establishment or activities of America Rising, America Rising Squared, and Protecting America Now, and any other organizations that are funding efforts to get you confirmed as EPA Administrator.

A. I am not aware of any such correspondence.

Your response was dubious then, and is even more dubious now.

The America Rising-Definers network has been no less active on your behalf following your confirmation than it was before, even putting aside this recent contract. The aforementioned Joe Pounder, president of Definers *and* America Rising, wears yet another hat in this constellation of interconnected partisan groups: he runs a website called the Need to Know Network (NTK) that has provided favorable coverage of your tenure at EPA.¹³ EPA's official Twitter account has even on several occasions tweeted NTK's coverage of your work at EPA.

¹⁰ "FRACTURED: Undermining Broomfield," *The Colorado Independent*, <http://www.coloradoindependent.com/167431/fractured-undermining-broomfield>

¹¹ America Rising PAC Contributors (2016), Open Secrets.org, <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgave2.php?cmte=C00542902&cycle=2016>

¹² "Conservatives target red-state Democrats to speed Trump's nominations," *Politico*, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/trump-nominations-red-state-democrats-232890>

¹³ "Scott Pruitt's media echo chamber," *Grist*, <http://grist.org/article/scott-pruitts-media-echo-chamber/>

As if all this weren't enough, Definers has filed several Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with EPA relating to work EPA was doing under the previous administration with respect to the treatment of wood.¹⁴ It would appear that Definers is working for a corporate client that has business before EPA relating to this matter. America Rising has also filed several FOIA requests with EPA.¹⁵ These requests were filed by the same person who filed the FOIA requests for Definers; this person works at both Definers and America Rising.¹⁶ America Rising's FOIA requests seek to obtain emails from specific EPA employees and/or correspondence between specific EPA employees and various media outlets as well as the staffs of Senators Sheldon Whitehouse, Tom Carper, Elizabeth Warren, and Robert Casey in an apparent effort to uncover "moles" within EPA.

The *New York Times* has recently documented how EPA enforcement has fallen off significantly during your tenure.¹⁷ Senators Carper and Whitehouse last week raised concerns that you have changed agency policy to give regulated industries an unprecedented seat at the table in negotiations to settle lawsuits where EPA is charged with failing to follow through on its statutory commitments to enforce the Clean Air Act and other environmental laws. Hiring a public relations firm with abundant ties to industries you regulate, which is itself part of a broader network of groups active on behalf of you and fossil fuel interests, suggests that you have handed industry the keys to EPA.

None of this can come as a surprise to you. In 2015, America Rising paid to attend the Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA) annual summit at which you spoke.¹⁸ You led RAGA for two years, where you worked through RAGA to attack EPA during the Obama administration.

Your representatives have claimed that EPA's contract with Definers is for "media monitoring/newsclip compilation"¹⁹ and that it was retained "at a rate that is \$87,000 cheaper than our previous vendor and they are providing no other services."²⁰ All of the above information about Definers, its activities, clients, and role within a much larger ecosystem of partisan, industry-funded operations research and electioneering groups casts significant doubt on these statements.

In light of the above and in order to shed light on EPA's decision to award this contract, we are asking that you provide the following documents and responses by Thursday, December 21.

¹⁴ EPA Pending FOIA Requests, https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-09/documents/all_pending_report_20170831.pdf

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Allan Blutstein, Definers, <https://www.definersdc.com/allan-blutstein>

¹⁷ "Under Trump, E.P.A. Has Slowed Actions Against Polluters, and Put Limits on Enforcement Officers," *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/10/us/politics/pollution-epa-regulations.html>

¹⁸ "To Fight Clean Power Plan, Fossil Fuel Companies Paid for Private Meetings with Republican State Prosecutors," DeSmogBlog, <https://www.desmogblog.com/2016/09/07/fight-clean-power-plan-fossil-fuel-companies-paid-private-meetings-republican-state-prosecutors>

¹⁹ "The EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press Activity," *Mother Jones*, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/12/the-epa-hired-a-major-republican-opposition-research-firm-to-track-press-activity/>

²⁰ "E.P.A. Contractor Has Spent Past Year Scouring the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials," *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/15/us/politics/epa-scott-pruitt-foia.html>

1. Provide copies of all documents related to the procurement of services with Definers as well as the contract EPA concluded with Definers for these services.
2. What provision of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) authorized a no-bid contract for the type of services EPA procured from Definers? According to the contract transaction details posted on the [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) website, the reason not to put this contract out to bid was that there was “only one source – other.”²¹ Please explain what this means when in fact there are many firms that offer the services for which EPA contracted with Definers, including the firm that previously did that work.
3. Provide copies of all communications between EPA and Definers, America Rising, America Rising Squared, NTK, and any employees and representatives of these entities since February 17, 2017.
4. Confirm that all communications you or any EPA employee have had with any person in question 3, regardless of the form of communication used, have been retained by EPA and searched in response to this inquiry.
5. Provide communications or documentation to establish that no EPA funds paid to Definers or any affiliated group have been spent for “publicity or propaganda” or a “prepackaged news story” in violation of sections 715, 718 or 731 of division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017.
6. Provide communications or documentation to establish that no EPA funds paid to Definers or any affiliated group have been spent with the intent or the reasonable expectation that the funds would be used to make a contribution, expenditure, independent expenditure, or disbursement for an electioneering communication in violation of section 735 of division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017.
7. Provide all communications between EPA and the Definers – America Rising network as to and regulated entities that are also clients of or donors to Definers – America Rising. Describe and provide all communications related to EPA’s due diligence efforts to determine if any conflicts of interest existed between the agency and regulated entities that are clients of or donors to Definers – America Rising. Provide all communications to or from EPA related to Broomfield, CO, ballot initiative Question 301 this year.²²
8. Provide documentation or, if not available, a narrative description of the processes and procedures in place to ensure no client or funder of Definers-America Rising or any related entity can exert improper influence over EPA enforcement proceedings or litigation.
9. Provide all communications between EPA and the Definers – America Rising – NTK network of affiliated groups relating to EPA employee communications that were requested under FOIA by anyone from the Definers – America Rising – NTK network of affiliated groups. These employees include but are not limited to Natasha Greaves,

²¹ Definers, USA Spending,

<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>


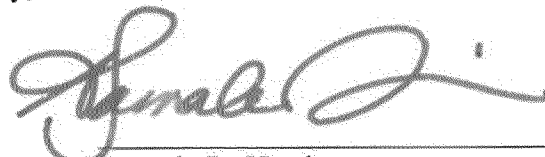
²² “FRACTURED: Undermining Broomfield,” *The Colorado Independent*, <http://www.coloradoindependent.com/167431/fractured-undermining-broomfield>

Michael Mikulka, Lucretia Meyers, Thelma Estrada, Gary Morton, Anthony Tseng, Christopher Grundler, Mike Shapiro, John Reeder, Enesta Jones, Christie St. Clair, Deborah Szaro, Michael Cox, Elizabeth Southerland, and Priscilla Oliver. In an interview with the New York Times, Allan Blutstein, a senior vice president at Definers explained that he sought this information to take aim at “resistance” figures in the federal government and to see if they had done anything useful for Republicans.²³ If any of these individuals have faced adverse personnel actions since February 17, 2017, please explain the nature of the action, the circumstances surrounding the action, and provide any correspondence concerning those individuals between EPA and any person affiliated with the Definers – America Rising – NTK network of affiliated groups.

10. Explain how the facts described above – America Rising’s active financial support of your confirmation as well as your earlier political career, NTK’s favorable press coverage of your tenure at EPA, Definer’s working on behalf of regulated entities, regulated entities funding America Rising’s work – do not constitute a series of conflicts of interest. We would be particularly interested to learn why you believe that scientists who are awarded EPA grant money are conflicted while the Definers – America Rising – NTK network is not.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the information we are requesting in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact our staffers, Dan Dudis at dan_dudis@whitehouse.senate.gov and Monica Pham at monica_pham@harris.senate.gov. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

²³ “E.P.A. Contractor Has Spent Past Year Scouring the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/15/us/politics/epa-scott-pruitt-foia.html>

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:41:24 PM
Subject: RE: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Sun 4/16/2017 2:56:39 PM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: EASTER EDITION -- North Korea's missile flop -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: The White House schedule next week: TOM BRADY coming -- JOHN KELLY leans in on immigration -- KATIE PACKER and RICH BEESON wedding

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/16/2017 10:50 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

Happy Easter! It's absolutely gorgeous today in D.C. Step away from work. All of this will be here when you return.

NEWS -- VP MIKE PENCE said at a dinner at U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul that the failed North Korean missile test was a "provocation," per Andrew Beatty of AFP, today's pooler on Pence's trip. "Let me assure you that under President Trump's leadership our resolve has never been stronger, our commitment to this historic alliance with the courageous people of South Korea has never been stronger and with your help and God's help freedom will ever prevail on this peninsula."

LEAD OF THE DAY -- WaPo's ANNA FIFIELD in Tokyo: "With the kind of fanfare that only a totalitarian state can muster, North Korea on Saturday flaunted missiles that can theoretically reach the United States and defiantly stated that it was prepared to counter any U.S. attack with 'a nuclear war of our own.'"

"But it soon looked like a case of style over substance . North Korea somewhat ruined the impression created with the parade, which took place on the most important day of the year for Kim Jong Un's regime, with a failed missile launch Sunday morning. The ballistic missile was fired from the Sinpo area on the east coast shortly before 6 a.m. local time, U.S. Pacific Command said. It blew up almost immediately, complicating efforts to identify the missile's size and range." <http://wapo.st/2oAsRwO>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- THE WHITE HOUSE WEEK AHEAD -- MONDAY: The

president goes to the White House Easter egg roll. **TUESDAY:** The president goes to Wisconsin. **WEDNESDAY:** The president has a "Veterans Affairs choice event," and then hosts the New England Patriots at 1:30 p.m. to congratulate them on their Super Bowl win. **THURSDAY:** Italian PM Paolo Gentiloni will visit the White House and meet with the president.

-- **NOTES ON THIS WEEK: TOM BRADY** is expected at the White House when the Pats come, according to sources familiar with the planning. ... The Italian PM visit to the White House is being viewed internally as important. Italy has the second-largest troop presence in Iraq, so West Wing aides see this as more than a photo op.

TRUMP TWEETS -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:18 a.m.: "Why would I call China a currency manipulator when they are working with us on the North Korean problem? We will see what happens!" ... **at 8:24 a.m.:** "Happy Easter to everyone!" ... **at 9:07 a.m.:** "I did what was an almost an impossible thing to do for a Republican-easily won the Electoral College! Now Tax Returns are brought up again?" ... **at 9:13 a.m.:** "Someone should look into who paid for the small organized rallies yesterday. The election is over!" ... **at 9:41 a.m.:** "Our military is building and is rapidly becoming stronger than ever before. Frankly, we have no choice!"

-- **NOTE:** Trump has held several campaign-style rallies since winning the election.

SUNDAY BEST -- CHUCK TODD speaks to **HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY JOHN KELLY** on NBC's "MEET THE PRESS" -- **TODD :** "Let me get into the issue of immigration and your role in it, and this idea of a deportation force. I know you pushed back on this phrase. But there is apparently a plan to hire 10,000 new ICE agents, 5,000 new border patrol agents. What do you call this if not a deportation force?" **KELLY:** "A law enforcement force. Men and women who will do their jobs in the future as they've done them in the past. And that is execute and uphold the nation's laws. There are a huge number, as you know, of illegal aliens or undocumented individuals that have to be dealt with in one way or another.

"I would argue, Chuck, that we have to straighten this out. And I place that squarely on the United States Congress. It's a hugely complex series of laws, and I engage the Hill quite a bit and get an earful about what I should do and what I shouldn't do. But it all comes down to the law, doesn't it? And we are a nation of laws, and I would hope that the Congress fixes a lot of these problems." ...

KELLY : "Homeland Security has not had a good relationship with the press. I am going out of my way. I've hired some of the best people I could find. We are leaning forward with the press. I'm sitting here in front of you right now. ... We're doing the same thing with the Hill. The House and Senate. I've been over numerous times to sit down with members not only hearings, but members of Congress, the Hispanic Caucus, the Democratic Caucus on the House side. I'm doing the best I can to reach out. You may not agree with what I say, or you may not like the answers I give, but they're honest, they're straightforward and they're all based on the law."

MARTHA RADDATZ speaks to **NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER H.R. McMaster** on **ABC's "THIS WEEK"** --**RADDATZ**: "You know, one of the big concerns here, General McMaster, is how North Korea would respond to aggressive action or some sort of preemptive strike. How do you think they would respond?"

McMaster: "Well, that's what particularly difficult about -- about dealing with this regime, is that it is unpredictable. This is someone who has demonstrated his brutality by murdering his own brother, by murdering others in his family, by imprisoning large numbers of people in horrible conditions for no reason, for political reasons. So this regime has given the world reason for concern. And that includes -- that includes the Chinese people and the Chinese leadership as well."

-- **McMaster** on whether more troops are needed in Syria: "That remains to be seen. I don't think so."

K.T. McFarland speaks to **CHRIS WALLACE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY"** -- From Kevin Robillard: "After 'Fox News Sunday' host Chris Wallace asked if she was on her way out because Flynn hired her, McFarland issued a corrective: 'First of all, President Trump hired me. He gave me a call on Thanksgiving Day.'

"Gen. Flynn has departed, and Gen. McMaster has arrived," she said. 'I've helped through that transition and the president and I have had a number of conversations over the last two months, really, about what my role will continue to be and where I could be best used, for what his vision is of foreign policy. I can tell you we talked about it again last night, and there are changes coming. But I'm not going to tell you what they are.'"
<http://politi.co/2oDBHvf>

-- **McFarland** also declined to say whether the U.S. meddled in the North Korea missile test.

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Tax reform, skills and workforce development and infrastructure investment are some of the keys to unlocking inclusive American economic growth. Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Annual Shareholder letter <http://politi.co/2oaMj4Q> *****

JAKE TAPPER speaks with **SEN. BERNIE SANDERS** (I-Vt.) on **"STATE OF THE UNION"** -- **TAPPER**: "Kansas and Georgia are red states. You're on this red state tour that is going to kick off tomorrow. But just this week, a Democrat you supported lost an election for a special House seat election in Kansas. Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff is seeking to fill in Georgia a seat vacated by the now secretary of health and human services, Secretary Dr. Tom Price in Georgia. Are you concerned that the DNC -- they're doing this big red state tour with you, but a lot of people criticized the DNC for not sending enough resources to Kansas. So, it's great that they're doing this display."

SANDERS: "... [W]hat I think has happened now, in Kansas, it is true that the

Democratic candidate lost. It is true that the Democratic Party should have put more resources into that election. But it is also true that he ran 20 points better than the -- than the Democratic candidate for president did in Kansas." ...

TAPPER: "Senator, I want to ask you about this horrific incident last week in which a passenger was dragged off a United flight after refusing to give up his seat voluntarily. Democratic Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, she is planning to introduce legislation that would ban airlines from being able to involuntarily bump passengers from flights. Airlines say that this kind of congressional meddling could -- meddling could result in much higher fares for consumers. What do you think Congress should do?"

SANDERS : "Well, I think anybody who flies a lot -- and, as a United States senator, I fly a lot -- knows how dysfunctional, in many respects, the airlines are. They know that there are many, many delays that are caused not because of weather, but because of inappropriate practices on the part of the airlines. This overbooking, which caused this particular problem, is not unique. I have been on airlines many, many times where people have been asked to leave. And I think what we do need is to take a hard look at the airlines in this country and make them much more responsive to the consumers than they currently are. In terms of pricing, I mean, you can have two people on an airline, one is spending twice as much as another person. So, the idea of taking a hard look at airline travel and, by the way, the consolidation of ownership in the airline industry is something that I think would be a very useful effort."

PALACE INTRIGUE -- "Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump: Pillars of Family-Driven West Wing," by Peter Baker, Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman on A1 of the NYT: "More openly than any president before him, Mr. Trump is running his West Wing like a family business, and as he has soured on Mr. Bannon, his combative chief strategist, he has turned to his daughter and son-in-law. Their ascendance has some conservative supporters fretting about the rising influence of the urbane young New Yorkers, as some moderates and liberals swallow concerns about nepotism in the hope that the couple will temper the temperamental president. ...

"Lately, he has pushed to overhaul the criminal justice system, a goal that Mr. Trump embraced as a candidate near the end of the campaign when he tried to siphon black voters away from Hillary Clinton. But Mr. Kushner is running into opposition from Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who favors toughening, not relaxing, mandatory minimum sentences. ...

"When Ms. Trump does intervene, her father listens -- although he does not always take her advice. One person close to the family described her influence as a delayed-action fuse: At times the president will mention a point Ms. Trump made, uncredited, days later. ...

"Mr. Trump would prefer the situation with Mr. Bannon to stabilize, according to people familiar with his thinking, and to keep Mr. Bannon on board, albeit in a more circumscribed role, than see him become a populist critic outside the gates. Mr. Bannon

intuitively understands the president's connection to white working-class voters and his instinct to demolish political norms." <http://nyti.ms/2pISggy>

OBSERVATION KING MATT NUSSBAUM -- "Has Trump found religion in the Oval Office?: The president is mentioning God more than ever during his public appearances": "President Donald Trump has increasingly infused references to God into his prepared remarks -- calling on God to bless all the world after launching strikes in Syria, asking God to bless the newest Supreme Court Justice, invoking the Lord to argue in favor of a war on opioids." <http://politi.co/2p7us03>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Turks vote in historic referendum on expanding Erdogan's power," by Reuters' Tuvan Gumrukcu and Humeyra Pamuk: "Turks cast their votes in a referendum on Sunday that would give sweeping new powers to President Tayyip Erdogan and herald the most radical change to the country's political system in its modern history. Opinion polls have shown a narrow lead for a 'Yes' vote, which would replace Turkey's parliamentary democracy with an all-powerful presidency and may see Erdogan in office until at least 2029. The outcome will also shape Turkey's strained relations with the European Union. The NATO member state has curbed the flow of migrants - mainly refugees from wars in Syria and Iraq - into the bloc but Erdogan says he may review the deal after the vote." <http://reut.rs/2ppCpKS>

FOR THE HILL -- "4 takeaways from the town halls terrorizing the GOP," by Kyle Cheney and Rachael Bade: "Republicans eager to flee Capitol Hill after squandering weeks on failed negotiations to repeal Obamacare are finding little refuge at home, where furious throngs of liberal constituents await. Halfway through the two-week Easter break, it's clear that the energy on the left to protect Barack Obama's health law - and oppose President Donald Trump - is still soaring. ... POLITICO reporters traveled to nearly a dozen town halls to document the tumultuous homecoming Republicans faced. Here are four takeaways from Congress' first week on the road, with reporting from Colorado, Florida, Ohio, Oregon, New Jersey, New York and Texas. ... 1) Republican AHCA critics sharpened their skepticism of the bill ... 2) The House GOP's civil war is getting noticed beyond the Beltway ... 3) Republicans have gotten better at handling hostile crowds ... 4) Taking on Trump is a winner for Republicans." <http://politi.co/2oN0ZYj>

DEMS' TAKE ON GEORGIA SPECIAL -- The much-watched special election for HHS Secretary Tom Price's House seat is Tuesday. Republicans have more than a dozen candidates running, and Democrats have coalesced around Jon Ossoff. If Ossoff clears the 50 percent mark, there will be a June runoff. Democrats are selling Ossoff's inability to close the deal as a win. Their thinking: Ossoff will finish first with more than 40 percent of the vote and be in a strong position for the runoff. "The extent to which Republicans will stay home or defect, and that Democrats will turn out, is unknown. We are in uncharted special election territory," emailed one Democrat involved in the race. "There are 18 candidates splitting the vote - including 4 other Democrats - so it will be hard for anyone to win outright, regardless of their popularity."

TRUMP'S WASHINGTON -- "Trump's Beyoncé-free Easter Egg Roll," by Nancy Cook: "Last year's White House Easter egg roll featured a surprise visit from Beyoncé; athletes from the NBA and Washington Redskins; and a performance by actress and singer Idina Menzel, the voice behind that catchy song from the movie 'Frozen.' This year, the big act for the Trump administration is the Martin Family Circus, a six-person family band from Nashville that's driving up to D.C. for the annual event in an RV.

"President Trump spent weeks comparing the size of his inauguration crowds to President Obama's, yet for the White House's first big public event -- the Easter egg roll -- officials have gone out of their way to lower expectations. While last year's crowd was estimated at about 37,000 people, press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters that only 21,000 are expected on Monday -- though the White House has ordered 18,000 eggs, 'in line with past years,' according to Spicer, who participated in the event as the Easter Bunny in 2008." <http://politi.co/2p7r2dY>

THE JUICE ...

-- **"THE CIRCUS" SNEAK PEEK: MARK HALPERIN** visited the Marist Institute for Public Opinion after President Donald Trump bombed Syria. The show airs tonight at 8 p.m. on Showtime. **4-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2nR9ti0>

-- **CNN's DAN MERICA** profiles Keith Schiller, Donald Trump's longtime bodyguard and, as one former top campaign aide put it, the "most underestimated person on Trump's team." <http://cnn.it/2oAAMtS>

SNL LAST NIGHT - "Donald Trump Cold Open" - In the Oval Office -- **Trump (played by Alec Baldwin):** "Look around Mike, we've had such great memories in this room." **Mike Pence (Beck Bennett):** "Oh, if these walls could talk." **Trump:** "Oh my God! Can they? Wasn't me!" **Pence:** "Ooh, oh, no sir that's just a saying." **Trump:** "Like I was saying, so many memories in this room. This is where I met with the Chinese president." **Pence:** "That was at Mar-a-Lago sir." **Trump:** "This is where I ordered the Syrian strike." **Pence:** "That was also at Mar-a-Lago sir." **Trump:** "This is where I showed classified information to the Japanese prime minister." **Pence:** "That was in front of a bunch of waiters at Mar-a-Lago, sir."

Trump: "Well, I know one thing that was here for sure. Remember when I refused to shake the hand of that little German boy?" **Pence:** "Hmm ... you mean Angela Merkel?" **Trump:** "Whatever his name was. The point is these 100 days have been such a success and I'm so sad is finally coming to an end." **Pence:** "No sir, you still have over 1300 days left." **Trump:** "I don't know. Have you seen my tweets about North Korea? This could all be over by Monday." **6-min. video - Jimmy Fallon plays Jared later in the segment** <http://bit.ly/2oDIK7I>

--**"Easter Message from Sean Spicer"** - Spicer in an Easter Egg costume (played by Melissa McCarthy): "Now in defending the President's decision, unlike Syrian leader, umm, the leader of, what is his stupid name? I got Bazooka Felicia Ahmad Rashad. At

least Hitler never used chemical weapons. And everyone freaked. They were all like, 'boo-hoo, boo-hoo, what about the Holocaust centers?' And yeah, I know they're not really called Holocaust centers. Duh! I know that. I'm aware. I clearly meant to say concentration clubs. ... P.S.: you should know I am sensitive to the fact that they were sent there on trains. At least they didn't have to fly United, am I right?" **4-min. video**
<http://bit.ly/2p7DJp3>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A pro-Donald Trump supporter is taken into custody by police during competing demonstrations at Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park in Berkeley, California on April 15. | Anda Chu/San Jose Mercury News via AP

2020 IS HERE! -- "The 2020 New Hampshire primary has begun," by the Boston Globe's James Pindell: "Over a week in late April, three potential 2020 candidates will be in the state that traditionally hosts the nation's first presidential primary. Ohio Governor John Kasich, a Republican, will stop to promote his new book. Former vice president Joe Biden will address Democrats at their annual fund-raising dinner. And former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley will speak at Democratic activities in three towns. ...

"State Senator Lou D'Allesandro, a Democrat, said that O'Malley, 'e-mails me all the time, but he just doesn't connect with people for some reason.' D'Allesandro is currently intrigued by US Senator Mark Warner of Virginia. He spoke with him via phone last week to discuss the impact of Trump's budget on the Granite State (D'Allesandro called Warner - not the other way around). D'Allesandro said he has also been in contact with former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, who ran for president in 2008. And D'Allesandro is especially excited to hear Biden's message in the state later in the month. 'What Joe has always understood is that we as a party have to connect to the working-class people and get them to believe that we are working for them. That did not happen in the last presidential election,' said [D'Allesandro]." <http://bit.ly/2oAxJlu>

BUSINESS BURST -- "Older Workers Challenge Firms' Aggressive Pursuit of the Young," by WSJ's Jacob Gershman: "PricewaterhouseCoopers bills itself as the 'place to work for millennials,' who have taken jobs and internships with the accounting giant in droves. The firm annually recruits thousands of newly minted college graduates. The firm's aggressive pursuit of youth is now the focus of a class-action suit, part of an emerging wave of litigation that is both testing the boundaries of age-discrimination liability and casting a legal cloud over college recruitment programs. Employment lawsuits alleging age bias aren't new and are usually brought by fired employees. Cases like the one against PwC allege discrimination against job applicants, whose civil rights

involve a surprisingly unsettled area of law." <http://on.wsj.com/2oDyuMb>

JUSTICE WATCH -- "'Apprentice' contestant, Sen. Cotton pal emerge as Trumpworld favorites for top South Florida prosecutor job," by Florida Playbook author Marc Caputo: "Two young Cuban-American Republicans from Miami are leading contenders to be South Florida's top federal prosecutor in what, sources tell POLITICO, is one of the most important federal jurisdictions to Donald Trump because it covers his home away from the White House, Mar-a-Lago. Both state Rep. Jose Felix 'Pepi' Diaz, 37, and John Couriel, 39, have interviewed with the Justice Department and were recommended, along with longtime attorney Jon Sale, for the Southern District of Florida U.S. Attorney post by Florida Sen. Marco Rubio ... Diaz is seen by some as a slight favorite because he has had a personal relationship with the president since 2006 when he was a contestant on Trump's TV show, 'The Apprentice.'" _
<http://politi.co/2ppGejq>

IF YOU READ ONE THING -- NYT A1, "With Trump Appointees, a Raft of Potential Conflicts and 'No Transparency,'" by Eric Lipton, Ben Protess and Andrew W. Lehren: "President Trump is populating the White House and federal agencies with former lobbyists, lawyers and consultants who in many cases are helping to craft new policies for the same industries in which they recently earned a paycheck. The potential conflicts are arising across the executive branch ... In at least two cases, the appointments may have already led to violations of the administration's own ethics rules. But evaluating if and when such violations have occurred has become almost impossible because the Trump administration is secretly issuing waivers to the rules. ...

"In several cases, officials in the Trump administration now hold the exact jobs they targeted as lobbyists or lawyers in the past two years. Trump White House officials had over 300 recent corporate clients and employers, including Apple, the giant hedge fund Citadel and the insurance titan Anthem, according to a Times analysis of financial disclosures. (The White House has released disclosures for only about half of its roughly 180 current senior political employees.) And there are more than 40 former lobbyists in the White House and the broader federal government."
<http://nyti.ms/2ogcmVu>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** In his recent Annual Shareholder letter, JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon stressed the importance of deepening our investment in infrastructure, noting "Infrastructure should not be a stop-start process but an ongoing endeavor whereby intelligent investments are made continuously." Learn more: <http://politi.co/2oKtc2G> *****

GET SMART FAST -- WILLIAM J. PERRY in Politico Magazine, "How to Make a Deal With North Korea: Escalating tensions have made a diplomatic solution possible. It might be the last chance we have": "The danger is not, as some believe, that North Korea will make good on its bluster and actually launch a surprise nuclear attack. The North Korean leadership, while it is evil and sometimes reckless, is not crazy or suicidal. Their primary goal is to sustain the Kim dynasty and, against all odds, they have

shrewdly succeeded in that for many decades. They know that if they launch a nuclear attack, the American response would bring death to them and devastation to their country.

"The primary danger instead is that North Korea might overplay its hand and provoke a military response from South Korea. This could quickly expand into a larger conventional war, inevitably involving the United States, which has almost 30,000 troops based in South Korea. North Korea would lose such a war, and as the leadership sees their regime collapsing, they might then launch their nuclear weapons in one last desperate move—a Korean Armageddon. Our diplomacy should be tailored to prevent that catastrophic outcome." <http://politi.co/2ojJ5Zz>

WHAT JAKE AND BOB COSTA ARE READING -- "California Journal: Deadheads aren't the only ones who'll enjoy this 'Long Strange Trip,'" by the L.A. Times' Robin Abcarian: "I can't imagine that anyone will walk away from 'Long Strange Trip,' Amir Bar-Lev's remarkable four-hour documentary about the Grateful Dead, without a newfound appreciation for the band's music and its place in American popular culture." <http://lat.ms/2ojBV7x>

BONUS GREAT HOLIDAY WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"Do Aliens Have Inalienable Rights?"** by Peter Singer in Nautilus Magazine: "What ET teaches us about our moral obligations." <http://bit.ly/2og7xuB>

--**"Hunting Child Predators with Canada's Freelance Vigilantes,"** by Suzy Khimm in Esquire. "The Creep Hunters want to prove that it's possible to be ethical avengers—venturing out of normal civilian life to rid the world of darkness without crossing the line themselves." <http://bit.ly/2ojKA9R>

--**"What My Stroke Taught Me,"** by Lauren Marks in Nautilus Magazine: "It was not just my external language that was ailing. My inner monologue, my self-directed speech, had also gone almost completely mute. In its place was the radiant Quiet. The nourishing Quiet. The illuminating Quiet. I was experiencing a near-constant sensation of interconnectedness, but my observations often lacked specific categories and dimensions. It was all happening to me and through me, but not necessarily because of me." <http://bit.ly/2pBGgnA>

--**"Who are the new jihadis?"** by Olivier Roy in The Guardian: "The systematic association with death is one of the keys to understanding today's radicalisation: the nihilist dimension is central. What seduces and fascinates is the idea of pure revolt. Violence is not a means. It is an end in itself." <http://bit.ly/2p3Zw0Z> (h/t TheBrowser.com)

--**"The Syria Catastrophe,"** by Richard Beck in n+1 magazine: "The response required at this late, desperate stage is neither anti-Assad nor anti-ISIS nor even anti-imperialist — it is antiwar." <http://bit.ly/2pBO8Wj>

--"**Letter From a Drowned Canyon** ," by Rebecca Solnit in California Sunday: "The story of water in the West, climate change, and the birth of modern environmentalism lies at the bottom of Lake Powell." <http://bit.ly/2oljFss>

--"**Margaret Atwood, the Prophet of Dystopia**," by The New Yorker's Rebecca Mead: "Her fiction has imagined societies riddled with misogyny, oppression, and environmental havoc. These visions now feel all too real." <http://bit.ly/2nNwtOZ>

--"**The End of Independent Film As We Know It**," by Sean Fennessey in The Ringer: "Twenty-five years ago, films emerging from festivals like Sundance disrupted the movie business, producing subversive filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino and insurgent forces like Miramax. Now, thanks to Amazon and Netflix, the disruption is coming for the indies. Filmmakers talk about the shift, and what it means for the future of movies." <http://bit.ly/2pfXCtO>

--"**We Have Found the Cure! (Sort Of...)**," by Taffy Brodesser-Akner in Outside Magazine: "Spa treatments have gotten wild in recent years, especially in Southern California, where women pay big bucks for radical remedies like colonics, juice fasts, and a Gwyneth Paltrow fave-the life-changing V-steam. Taffy Brodesser-Akner dons a satin robe and asks: If this is the path to happiness, why am I so freaked out?" <http://bit.ly/2ofOtwJ>

--"**The Dark Secret at the Heart of AI**," by Will Knight in Technology Review: "No one really knows how the most advanced algorithms do what they do. That could be a problem." <http://bit.ly/2ocQiv1>

--"**Mike Judge, the Bard of Suck**," by Willy Staley in the N.Y. Times Magazine: "From 'Idiocracy' to 'Silicon Valley,' the writer and director has established himself as America's foremost chronicler of its own self-destructive tendencies." <http://nyti.ms/2ovAOU2>

--"**High Tech Cowboys of the Deep Seas: The Race to Save the Cougar Ace**," by Joshua Davis in February 2008's Wired - per Longform's description: "An oddball team of ship salvagers is tasked with uprighting a tipped two-football-field-long cargo ship before it sinks into the darkness of Alaska's Aleutian Islands." <http://bit.ly/2og12rQ>

--"**The Mastermind Behind Coachella**," by John Seabrook in The New Yorker: "How Paul Tollett wrangles the biggest artists in the world into performing in the California desert." <http://bit.ly/2pgcccl>

--"**The World's 50 Best Restaurants Get by With a Lot of Unpaid Labor**," by Corey Mintz in Eater Magazine: "Without a significant volunteer staff, many prestigious restaurants could not function." <http://bit.ly/2pgje9s> (h/t Longreads.com)

Playbookers

SPOTTED -- NBA legend and Atlanta Hawks executive vice president Dominique Wilkins yesterday smoking a cigar outside the Ritz Carlton in the West End. He was sitting with Tim Hardaway, the former NBA all-star and father of Tim Hardaway Jr., the Atlanta Hawk. ... D.C. real estate mainstay Terri Robinson celebrating her 80th birthday at Cafe Milano ... Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, wife Renda and family at Harry's Restaurant Saturday afternoon. Tillerson enjoyed a chicken salad sandwich.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- RICH BEESON, partner at FLS Connect and a Rubio, Romney and RNC alum, and **KATIE PACKER**, partner at Burning Glass Consulting and a Romney-Ryan alum, got married in Silverthorne, Colorado, on April 8 and New Smyrna Beach, Florida, yesterday. In Colorado they were married at the ranch of Bruce and Marcy Benson. Bruce is the president of University of Colorado and a former GOP candidate for governor in Colorado (Rich previously worked for him). Marcy was in the Reagan and Bush 41 White House. New Smyrna Beach is where Katie's family has vacationed for years. They were joined by Rich's kids, parents and sister and her whole family. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2ogabl6> ... <http://bit.ly/2ojDwu7> ... <http://bit.ly/2oMSNXZ>

--"Alexandra Utsey and Christopher Jones: He Got the Job. They Got Each Other," by NYT's Vincent M. Mallozzi: "The bride, who is 30 ... is an Asia-Pacific adviser in the office of the defense secretary in Arlington, Va. She graduated summa cum laude from Washington and Lee University, and received a master's in public affairs from Princeton. ... The groom, also 30, works in Washington as the legislative director for Representative Rick Crawford, Republican of Arkansas. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and received a law degree from George Mason University. ... Ms. Utsey and Mr. Jones met in January 2010 at a bar in Georgetown, shortly after interviewing for the same staff job in Congress; it went to the groom." **With pic** <http://nyti.ms/2pFkFuu>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): DHS's Jason Lamote, the pride of Springfield, Minn. (hat tip: James Owens)

BIRTHDAYS: former Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken, celebrating with his band mates - Jay Carney, Eli Attie, Dave McKenna, and Dave Segal - in a local recording studio -- they have a tradition of changing the name every time they record. A recent name was "Big Lunch." Special guest appearance in studio today: Sen. Al Franken ... Cantor alum Doug Heye, the pride of Lewisville, N.C. and a leading oenophile - he's celebrating at a cookout with John Scofield who is converting to Catholicism over the weekend. He will then join Sara and Ron Bonjean, Matt Dornic and Kyle Volpe in Playa del Carmen, Mexico for the 75th annual spring meeting of the Magicians' Alliance (h/t Ron) ... Ann Romney is 68, celebrating Easter and her birthday with family in California ... Patriots coach Bill Belichick is 65 ... Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is 9-0 ... Scott Pastrick, president and CEO of Prime Policy Group and President Clinton's DNC

Treasurer, is 62 ... Chuck DeFeo, VP of products at i360, an RNC and Bush-Cheney alum and the pride of Kansas City, is 43 ... Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.) is 54 ... Jason Embry ... Sally-Shannon Birkel, U.S. Chamber of Commerce senior manager of media relations ... Morgan Jones, LD to Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ) ... Bradley Beychok, senior adviser and COS to David Brock, is 35 (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Matt Duckworth, VP of gov't relations at Hart Health Strategies, is 31 ... Virginia Coyne, executive editor at Washington Life Magazine ... Fran Holuba, founder of Chief Social Architects (h/ts Anastasia Dellaccio and Ben Chang) ... Deborah Zabarenko ... A Reuters trio: Andy Sullivan, Frances Kerry, and Anthony Boadle (h/t Ginger Gibson) ... Zack Hubbard ... former Veteran Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi is 73 ...

... **Heather Purcell**, press secretary for Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) ... Nick McGee, comms director for Rep. Larry Bucshon ... Antonio Armendáriz, press secretary for regional and specialty media for the House Democratic Caucus ... former Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.) is 76 ... American University sophomore Paige Pearson, a Schumer alum (h/t Colby Bermel) ... lawyer Fred Graefe ... Arezu Kay ... Tori O'Neal-McElrath, VP of Demos (h/t Kelley McCormick) ... Sarah Wolfson ... Politico's Aubree Abril ... Ramona Oliver, senior director of the NEA's Center for Communications ... Ted Anthony, director of AP's Asia-Pacific news ... NBC News' Mosheh Gains ... Paolo Sacco of Ristorante Tosca ... Jess Fuhrman ... Obama CEA alum Andie Taverna ... Lynn Schnurnberger ... Stephen Kessler ... Geoff Middleberg, principal of Dark Horse Strategy Group (h/t Josh Brown) ... Christopher Finan, CEO and co-founder of Manifold Technology ... Amy Kaslow ... Brett Coughlin ... Josh Goldstein ... Matt Duckworth ... Brian Bravo is 36 ... Annie Bardach ... Jim Hollis ... Howard Bauleke ... Jess Fuhrman ... Arlene Branca ... Mary Tabor (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 7-0 ... Martin Lawrence is 52 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** Optimistic about the future of America's economy, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon believes we need effective public policy and for business to play a role in developing solutions that spur economic growth and benefit every American. Learn more in his Annual Letter to Shareholders:
<http://politi.co/2nTquUG> *****

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To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/8/2017 10:37:20 PM
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Not that I'm aware of. Do you have any idea how many people we are talking about. I have about 130 EPA people on my press list.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 5:37 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks, Jahan. It looks competitive with other vendors I've seen. Do you know if there would be any limits on the number of recipients within EPA? - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 5:28 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 9/12/2017 10:27:48 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by CTIA: TRUMP hosting Dems at the W.H. for tax reform dinner -- ALEXANDER, PORTMAN and SHAHEEN break bread -- Russia probe: loyalty test for Trump staffers -- KATY TUR's new book is out -- B'DAY: Matt Lewis

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Driving the Day

THE NEXT TIME YOU HEAR SOMETHING ABOUT URGENCY IN WASHINGTON, remember this: the House comes in tonight at 6:30 p.m., and is gone by noon on Thursday. The week was cut short by Hurricane Irma, but still ...

L.A. TIMES MEXICO BUREAU CHIEF KATE LINTHICUM: (@katelinthicum): "After a devastating earthquake and hurricane (and after Trump failed to send condolences), Mexico today rescinded its offer of aid to the US".

Good Tuesday morning. SPOTTED: Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) dining at Tadich Grill on Pennsylvania Avenue Monday night. Could there be a health-care deal in the offing?

BURGESS EVERETT -- "Trump, continuing courting Democrats, will host dinner on tax reform": "Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Donnelly of Indiana have been invited and are expected to attend, aides said. GOP Sens. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania and John Thune of South Dakota are among the Republican attendees. ... The three moderate Democrats are all up for reelection next year in states Trump won handily in 2016. They have also been closer to the president than other congressional Democrats. Each declined to join a letter with party leaders outlining conditions on tax reform and all three supported Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch earlier this year." <http://politi.co/2xhae7p>

-- THE REALITY: Democrats have been shut out of the tax reform process. The Big Six is made up of only Republicans. Republicans have designed a legislative process that only requires Republican support -- reconciliation. When asked last week if Democrats would go along, Speaker Paul Ryan said, "I hope Democrats join us on tax reform. I

think that's fantastic if they do. We're going to go the path we've been planning on tax reform." **LET'S BE REAL:** Do you really think Donnelly, Manchin and Heitkamp's votes can be bought with some chicken? By the way, we heard this dinner was originally slated to be only Democrats.

AND, REMEMBER: Republicans have not yet passed a budget -- a prerequisite for tax reform. There's talk they'll take it up in the House in the last week of September, but the support is not nearly firm enough yet. There's a chance there is no final action on the budget until October or November. Without a budget, tax reform talks are just that, talk. **STEVEN MNUCHIN** and **GARY COHN** are meeting with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and the Republicans on the Budget Committee today.

-- More from Colin Wilhelm and Aaron Lorenzo on the lack of reform details

<http://politi.co/2eSWXHN>

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE? -- "Some Trump Lawyers Wanted Kushner Out," by WSJ's Peter Nicholas, Rebecca Ballhaus and Erica Orden: "Some of President Donald Trump's lawyers earlier this summer concluded that Jared Kushner should step down as senior White House adviser because of possible legal complications related to a probe of Russia's involvement in the 2016 presidential election and aired concerns about him to the president, people familiar with the matter said. Among their concerns was that Mr. Kushner was the adviser closest to the president who had the most dealings with Russian officials and businesspeople during the campaign and transition, some of which are currently being examined by federal investigators and congressional oversight panels. Mr. Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law and confidant, has said he had four such meetings or interactions."

<http://on.wsj.com/2y1yloz>

-- FLASHBACK: July 12, Axios's Jonathan Swan: "**Scoop: Trump lawyers want wall between Kushner, president**" <http://bit.ly/2y1HUE2>

-- "Russia probes pose loyalty test for Team Trump," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Lawyers representing Donald Trump's current and former aides are giving their clients one simple piece of advice: don't lie to protect the president. As special counsel Robert Mueller and congressional investigators prepare to question high-ranking aides - including Hope Hicks, Reince Priebus and Sean Spicer - in the coming weeks, Trump's long history of demanding his employees' complete loyalty are being put to the test.

"But Trump stalwarts know the president is closely following the media coverage of the Russia case - and the last thing they want is to be deemed a turncoat whose answers end up becoming further fuel for investigators. Several of the lawyers representing current and former aides told POLITICO they're actively warning their clients that any bonds connecting them to Trump won't protect them from criminal charges if federal prosecutors can nail them for perjury, making false statements or obstruction of justice." <http://politi.co/2h0Ab1b>

HURRICANE UPDATES ...

--**"Battered Florida tries to assess scope of Irma's destruction,"** by AP's Jennifer Kay in Miami and Doug Ferguson in Jacksonville: "Battered Florida tries to assess scope of Irma's destruction," by Aid rushed in to hurricane-scarred Florida early Tuesday, residents began to dig out, and officials slowly pieced together the scope of Irma's vicious path of destruction across the peninsula. ... [T]he fate of the Florida Keys ... remained largely a question mark. ... A Navy aircraft carrier was due to anchor off Key West to help in search-and-rescue efforts. Drinking water supplies in the Keys were cut off, fuel was running low and all three hospitals in the island chain were shuttered. A stunning 13 million people, two-thirds of the third-largest state's residents, plodded on in the tropical heat without electricity, and nearly every corner of Florida felt Irma's power." <http://bit.ly/2feMNSe>

-- **"Hurricane Irma's impact, from the air: Florida Keys a bit battered but mostly spared,"** by WaPo's Joel Achenbach "above the Florida Keys": "The Conch Republic is still here, if dark, dirty, trashed, and weeks away from being what it was before Hurricane Irma blew in. It wasn't devastated because, for some reason, this massive storm punched below its weight. This was a Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson wind scale as it rolled into the Keys. It brought a fair bit of destruction, and tossed boats onto lawns. It turned towns raggedy. But a tour of Southwest Florida and the Florida Keys on Monday afternoon by air suggests that this quirky storm spared the state the kind of direct, punishing violence that residents had dreaded.

"A Coast Guard C-130 transport plane carrying two U.S. senators, a congressman and a handful of journalists left from the Coast Guard air station in Opa-Locka, just north of Miami, for the two-hour tour of hurricane damage. At 2,000 feet, the journey offered no chance for a granular diagnosis, but the big picture was clear: Southwest Florida and its huge population of retirees emerged relatively unscathed. The storm severely battered some of the small and fragile Keys. Key West itself is generally intact, though without power, a water supply and a functional sewage system." <http://wapo.st/2wUekTh>

-- **NYT'S ALEX BURNS ANCHORS THE N.Y.T. LEAD ALL: "Damp, Dark and Disarrayed, Florida Starts Coping With Irma's Aftermath"** (with reporting by Trevor Aaronson from St. Petersburg, Fla.; Jess Bidgood from Tampa, Fla.; Audra Burch and Jonah Bromwich from Orlando, Fla.; Richard Fausset from Isle of Palms, S.C.; Sheri Fink from Houston; Henry Fountain from Naples, Fla.; Joseph B. Treaster from Miami; and Caitlin Dickinson, Christine Hauser, Hannah Fairfield, Daniel Victor and Mary Williams Walsh from New York). <http://nyti.ms/2wWTDUr>

DATA DU JOUR - Over 24 hours on Sunday, Snapchat received almost 250,000 submissions from Snapchatters to their Irma news story, which is two and a half times more than what the company saw during Harvey last week.

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum

and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture. Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

FOR THE WHITE HOUSE'S TO DO LIST -- "After nine months, federal offices are still waiting to hang Trump's picture," by WaPo's Lisa Rein: "In the lobby of every federal building, just inside security turnstiles and before the elevator banks, a framed photograph of the president has always hung on the wall. Not so anymore. Nine months after Donald Trump's inauguration, pictures of the president and Vice President Pence are missing from thousands of federal courthouses, laboratories, military installations, ports of entry, office suites and hallways, and from U.S. embassies abroad. ...

"Federal agencies ordered photographs of their new commander in chief months ago. But they say they are still waiting for the Government Publishing Office, the printer of official portraits, to send them for distribution by the General Services Administration, which owns or leases 9,600 federal buildings across the country. The Government Publishing Office says it has yet to receive the images from the White House. And the White House says the president and vice president have not yet decided when they will sit for the type of high-quality official photographs usually churned out by the modern GPO, continuing a portrait tradition that began after the Civil War."

<http://wapo.st/2vQrKfd>

THE LATEST ON NORTH KOREA ...

-- **"Oil will keep flowing, but UN sanctions hit Pyongyang hard,"** by AP's Eric Talmadge in Tokyo: "North Korea will be feeling the pain of new United Nations sanctions targeting some of its biggest remaining foreign revenue streams. But the Security Council eased off the biggest target of all: the oil the North needs to stay alive, and to fuel its million-man military.

"Though the United States had proposed a complete ban, the sanctions by the U.N. Security Council to punish North Korea for its sixth nuclear test cap Pyongyang's annual imports of crude oil at the same level they have been for the past 12 months: an estimated 4 million barrels. Exports of North Korean textiles are prohibited, and other nations are barred from authorizing new work permits for North Korean workers, putting a squeeze on two key sources of hard currency." <http://bit.ly/2gZalyz>

-- **"How Russia quietly undercuts sanctions intended to stop North Korea's nuclear program,"** by WaPo's Joby Warrick: "Russian smugglers are scurrying to the aid of North Korea with shipments of petroleum and other vital supplies that could help that country weather harsh new economic sanctions, U.S. officials say in an assessment that casts further doubt on whether financial measures alone can force dictator Kim Jong Un to abandon his nuclear weapons program. The spike in Russian exports is occurring as China -- by far North Korea's biggest trading partner -- is beginning to dramatically ratchet up the economic pressure on its troublesome neighbor in the face of provocative behavior such as last week's test of a powerful nuclear bomb.

"Official documents and interviews point to a rise in tanker traffic this spring between North Korean ports and Vladivostok, the far-eastern Russian city near the small land border shared by the two countries. With international trade with North Korea increasingly constrained by U.N. sanctions, Russian entrepreneurs are seizing opportunities to make a quick profit, setting up a maze of front companies to conceal - transactions and launder payments, according to U.S. law enforcement officials who monitor sanction-busting activity." <http://wapo.st/2vReWp4>

-- BREAKING THIS MORNING: BOEHNER TO TRUMP: DON'T WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH KOREAN TRADE DEAL: Former Speaker John Boehner -- a staunch proponent of free trade -- is urging Trump to bolster ties with Seoul: "For our strategic endeavors to succeed, however, the United States must strengthen -- not weaken -- its already vital economic relationships in the Pacific, from South Korea and Japan to Australia and China. We cannot isolate the regime in Pyongyang by isolating ourselves.

"Withdrawing from the Korea-U.S. Trade Agreement ... would undermine America's strategic objectives in the Pacific region and undercut our own workers and employers, who continue to depend on the free flow of goods and services between the US and the Republic of Korea. Instead of pulling back from our current engagements and commitments, we must renew and strengthen our relationships in the Pacific region, not just with South Korea, but with China, as reflected in the joint commitment to economic cooperation that was expressed by President Trump and President Xi in April; and with Australia and Japan, our long-standing allies, whose alliances and friendships with America are now more important than ever." ***PDF of full statement***
<http://politi.co/2wWphBn>

TRUMP'S BUDGET -- "Congress Rejects Trump Proposals to Cut Health Research Funds," by NYT's Robert Pear: "Back in March, when President Trump released the first draft of his budget proposal for the coming fiscal year, he asked lawmakers for deep cuts to one of their favorite institutions, the National Institutes of Health -- part of a broad reordering of priorities, away from science and social spending, toward defense and border security. Six months later, Congress has not only rejected the president's N.I.H. proposal; lawmakers from both parties have joined forces to increase spending on biomedical research - and have bragged about it.

"The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bipartisan bill last week providing \$36.1 billion for the health institutes in the fiscal year that starts next month. Senator Roy Blunt, Republican of Missouri and the chairman of the subcommittee responsible for health spending, said it was the third consecutive year in which he had secured a \$2 billion increase for the agency, amounting to an increase of about 20 percent over three years. The audience erupted in applause when Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, announced the increase at a hearing of a separate Senate committee."
<http://nyti.ms/2eSBRJL>

FOX NEWS' CHRIS WALLACE - "John Kelly fires back at Democrat who called

him 'disgrace to the uniform': "Illinois Rep. Luis Gutierrez had leveled the criticism at Kelly over his support of President Trump's decision to end a controversial program that shielded young illegal immigrants from deportation. In an email to Fox News late Sunday, Kelly responded by saying Congress did 'nothing' to help so-called Dreamers when they had the chance. 'As far as the congressman and other irresponsible members of congress are concerned, they have the luxury of saying what they want as they do nothing and have almost no responsibility,' Kelly said. 'They can call people liars but it would be inappropriate for me to say the same thing back at them. As my blessed mother used to say "empty barrels make the most noise."' <http://fxn.ws/2wmb6DC>

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is meeting with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. He meets with H.R. McMaster before hosting Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak at the White House. Afterwards, he is huddling with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. He's then hosting senators at the White House.

ANNA'S POSTCARD FROM LONDON -- POLITICO LONDON'S TOM MCTAGUE shares with us two fun tidbits from his upcoming book lifting the lid on Prime Minister Theresa May's disastrous decision to call a snap general election "**Betting the House: The Inside Story of the 2017 Election**" with Tim Ross. Interesting nuggets for this side of the pond -- former President Barack Obama called conservative campaign headquarters (the same team former aide Jim Messina worked for) on the day of the election to let them know someone from the Labour's campaign told him the party was going to lose 20 to 30 seats. ...

ON THERESA MAY: The two write that an aide briefing the prime minister before a Sunday show appearance in January was concerned May would get asked about President Donald Trump. "As she waited to collect the PM from her Sunday morning church service, May's spin chief knew she would have to find a way to prepare her boss. She decided she would just have to say it. 'Prime Minister, it's possible she will be asked what you think of Donald Trump saying he can grab women by the p****.' In the front seat of the Government Jaguar, the police protection officer snorted. May was told not to grimace because the camera was likely to zoom in on her face in a close-up. In the end, May remained perfectly composed, waiting, expressionless, before answering: 'I think that's unacceptable.' **Pre-order the book on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2xWN3MV>

THE JUICE ...

-- KATY TUR'S BOOK IS OUT TODAY ... WAPO'S CARLOS LOZADA - "Katy Tur's insider memoir chronicles the Trump campaign -- and the indignities of reporting while female" <http://wapo.st/2jlqfUm> ... **NYT REVIEW**, by Jill Abramson: "**A Memoir by Donald Trump's Favorite Target**" <http://nyti.ms/2vR1fX8> ... **BUY THE BOOK:** <http://amzn.to/2gXyRQA> ... Ranked No. 68 on Amazon as of this morning ... **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for Katy's event with Jake at Politics and Prose Sept. 22 <http://bit.ly/2wWffjD>

-- **MORNING JOE IS 10!** -- "Morning Joe" is starting a 10-year anniversary Twitter sweepstakes this morning ahead of the anniversary show on Sept. 19. **A pic of the prizes that fans can win** <http://bit.ly/2h0y2mv> ... **More info** <http://on.msnbc.com/2xtKk1p>

-- **American Action Network** is launching a \$2.5 million TV ad campaign on tax reform targeting 23 congressional districts nationwide, including those in leadership, on key committees, in the Freedom Caucus and holding competitive seats. **List of districts** <http://bit.ly/2eS79Aq> ... **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2wXgUFG>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- THREE NEW IPHONES -- "What to Expect at Apple's Biggest Event in Years: Look for the iPhone X, iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus and a bunch of other iProducts on Tuesday," by Bloomberg's Mark Gorman.
<https://bloom.bg/2wXChrQ>

DESSERT -- HAPPENING FRIDAY -- Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), a noted harmonica player, and Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), a multi-instrumentalist, are joining members of the Buck Mountain Band to perform as "The Amateurs" at the 17th Annual Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion on Friday. **15-second video of Alexander (on the piano) and Kaine practicing** <http://bit.ly/2jlguWj>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: A man with flowers stands at the edge of a waterfall pool at Ground Zero during a ceremony on the 16th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in New York. | Seth Wenig/AP Photo

AUSTIN WRIGHT: "Kaine hits the trail again, battling 2016 ghosts on his way": "An aide to Tim Kaine enters a diner in Charlottesville and informs the host that the Virginia senator is about to walk in. The host smiles and cracks a joke: 'You mean the guy who lost to Trump?' Ten months after the presidential election, Kaine is still trying to shed the stigma of being the vice presidential candidate on the ticket that came up short against Donald Trump, a man so reviled by Kaine's fellow Democrats that many of them can't bear the thought of him serving out his full four-year presidential term. The senator is back on the campaign trail - stumping in Virginia for Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ralph Northam and preparing for his own 2018 reelection campaign.

"But even as Kaine tries to keep his focus on the next election, there are constant reminders of the last one - the only election he's ever lost. Trump, it seems, looms over everything. Kaine isn't interested in relitigating one of the biggest electoral upsets in U.S. history. He looks visibly uncomfortable talking about the election and cautions against 'overinterpreting' what went wrong." <http://politi.co/2y1mR4B>

HRC: GOING NOWHERE -- NPR'S TAMARA KEITH interviews HILLARY CLINTON:

When asked about critics who believe she should disappear from public life, **CLINTON:** "Well, they're going to be disappointed because I think it's important for people with my experience and my insight into what went on in the campaign but more generally about our country to speak out. We need more voices, not fewer voices." ***Clinton chronicler Jonathan Allen in POLITICO magazine reviews her new book***
<http://politi.co/2vPKsUf>

STATE OF THE DARK ARTS -- "Russia Used Facebook Events to Organize Anti-Immigrant Rallies on U.S. Soil," by Ben Collins, Kevin Poulsen, and Spencer Ackerman in The Daily Beast: "Russian operatives hiding behind false identities used Facebook's event management tool to remotely organize and promote political protests in the U.S., including an August 2016 anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rally in Idaho, The Daily Beast has learned. A Facebook spokesperson confirmed to the Daily Beast that the social-media giant 'shut down several promoted events as part of the takedown we described last week.' ... The Facebook events-one of which echoed Islamophobic conspiracy theories pushed by pro-Trump media outlets-are the first indication that the Kremlin's attempts to shape America's political discourse moved beyond fake news and led unwitting Americans into specific real-life action." <http://thebea.st/2w42y94>

ISAAC DOVERE interviews **REP. WILL HURD (R-TEXAS)** in the latest **"OFF MESSAGE"** podcast: "To House Republicans who don't like the funding deal President Donald Trump made with Democrats, Rep. Will Hurd has a message: Get yourself together, or quit complaining. Otherwise, get used to the feeling of watching the Republican president brag about how much he's getting done with Chuck and Nancy. 'If we're not in agreement on what the topic is going to be or what we want to achieve, then guess what? You're probably not going in with a strong hand,' Hurd told Dovere. 'I think rank-and-file members need to understand that there is a team aspect to politics.' On getting rid of the debt ceiling: 'you give that up, you're basically giving up your responsibility.'" <http://politi.co/2vQPjVr> ... ***Listen to the full podcast***
<http://apple.co/2h1efTG>

ROSIE GRAY: "An Ousted NSC Official Is Joining the House Intelligence Committee Staff": "A former National Security Council official, forced out by National-Security Adviser H.R. McMaster in July, is set to join the staff of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, according to two sources familiar with his move. Derek Harvey, who was the NSC's senior director for the Middle East and had been appointed by the former National-Security Adviser Michael Flynn, was among several officials who were ousted this summer." <http://theatlantic.com/2xWNYNg>

******* A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G

wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

GOOD LIFE LESSON -- "An Exit Interview With Richard Posner, Judicial Provocateur," by NYT's Adam Liptak: "Judge Richard A. Posner, whose restless intellect, withering candor and superhuman output made him among the most provocative figures in American law in the last half-century, recently announced his retirement. The move was abrupt, and I called him up to ask what had prompted it. 'About six months ago,' Judge Posner said, 'I awoke from a slumber of 35 years.' He had suddenly realized, he said, that people without lawyers are mistreated by the legal system, and he wanted to do something about it.

"For starters, as is his habit when his interest alights on a fresh topic, he wrote a book on the subject. Judge Posner blurts out books at a comic pace. 'I realized, in the course of that, that I had really lost interest in the cases,' he said. 'And then I started asking myself, what kind of person wants to have the same identical job for 35 years? And I decided 35 years is plenty. It's too much. Why didn't I quit 10 years ago? I've written 3,300-plus judicial opinions.'" <http://nyti.ms/2wU2vfX>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Laura Ingraham set to take over Fox News' 10 p.m. slot," by CNN's Brian Stelter and Hadas Gold: "Ingraham is expected to take over the 10 p.m. hour on Fox News, according to people who spoke on condition of anonymity. While there may be one or two final details to negotiate, Ingraham has been telling friends that the deal is essentially done ... Her new show will be part of a broader change to the network's top-rated prime time lineup. Sean Hannity's show, currently at 10 p.m., will move one hour earlier to 9 p.m. ... And 'The Five,' a talk show originally named for its 5 p.m. time slot, will shift from 9 p.m. back to its namesake hour." <http://cnnmon.ie/2wW1h15>

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK** -- From an FT memo going out today: "Pilita Clark is appointed business columnist and associate editor. ... Lyndsey Jones is appointed an executive editor. ... Robin Kwong is appointed head of digital delivery under editorial director Robert Shrimsley. ... Paul Murphy is appointed investigations editor."

-- **KIMBERLY DOZIER** has been named executive editor of The Cipher Brief. She previously was a reporter for the AP, CBS News and The Daily Beast.

-- **SCOTT WILSON** will cover "the West and especially California" for The Washington Post. He had been national editor (h/t Morning Media).

-- **TAYLOR ANTRIM** has been named executive editor of Vogue. He has spent five years at Vogue, first as senior editor and then articles editor.

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Gina McCarthy last night at Dirty Habit bar near the EPA, having a relaxed drink. She had a rolling backpack with her. ... Carly Fiorina last night at Charlie Palmer ... Justice Stephen Breyer in coach on American's 5:30 p.m. shuttle from DCA to Boston ... Eric Cantor at District Commons last night entertaining two people -- *pic* <http://bit.ly/2wUoB1S> ... former Ariz. Sen. Jon Kyl in seat 23C of an American Airlines flight from PHX to DCA.

OUT AND ABOUT - Pool report: "The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute kicked off their annual conference with a reception featuring Google Arts & Culture's new Latino Cultures in the U.S. -- the largest ever online collection of artifacts and stories dedicated to U.S. Latino history and culture. Guests entered through a hologram wall of the mural 'Mundos de Mestizaje' by Frederico Vigil and took virtual field trips in the virtual reality lounges."

SPOTTED: Reps. Joaquín Castro (D-Texas), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.) Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.), Jimmy Gómez (D-Calif.) and Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.), Mayor Muriel Bowser, Henry Muñoz and Kyle Ferari, Domenika Lynch, Susan Molinari, Caroline Atkinson, Daniel Alegre, Laura Marquez, Stephanie Valencia and Katherine Vargas.

TRANSITIONS -- Tina Tchen is returning to Chicago to lead the Chicago office of the law firm Buckley Sandler <http://trib.in/2wXdMel> ... **Adam Sharon** has joined the Harbour Group as a senior vice president. He previously worked at Prime Strategies, and was the former Democratic communications director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. ... **Adrienne Kimmell** is joining NARAL Pro-Choice America as the VP of strategic research. She previously was executive director of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation and Barbara Lee political office. ...

... **Farrin Jay** has joined the Snap Inc communications team. She was previously at NBC News, where she did PR for the "Today Show." ... **Chris Simone** started this week as a legislative affairs specialist on contract to FEMA for Klett Consulting Group. He was previously a researcher at America Rising Squared.

K STREET FILES -- Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas is launching a new podcast, "14th & G," which is "designed to deliver quick, easily digestible insights into the business of Washington". The podcast is hosted by Mehlman Castagnetti principal CR Wooters. <http://politi.co/2xhvx8T>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): hedge fund manager David Tepper ... Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Matt Lewis, senior columnist at The Daily Beast and CNN political commentator. **A fun fact about Matt:** "My mom had twelve siblings; my dad had nine. They must have gotten tired of all the noise, because I'm an only child." **Read**

his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2wWcfUh>

BIRTHDAYS: "Face the Nation" senior producer Jill Jackson (hat tip: Caitlin Conant) ... Andrea DiVito of "Fox News Sunday" ... GQ's Ben Schreckinger ... Politico's Walt Houseknecht ... Don Fowler, former DNC chairman ... former Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) ... former Waxman staffer Greg Wetstone ... Dave Willett ... Johnny Enterline of LCV ... Natalie Raps, director at SKDKnickerbocker ... Andrew Whalen ... Rep. Evan Jenkins (R-W.Va.) ... Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-Ind.) ... Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback ... Ed Moy, former director of the U.S. Mint ... Maria Harris Roumel ... Desiree Sayle ... Jill Alper (h/t Jon Haber) ... Max D'Onofrio, press secretary for Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) ... Emily Lampkin ... Melissa Schulman, SVP of gov't and public affairs at CVS Health ... former Sen. Scott Brown (D-Mass.) (h/t Ryan Williams) ... Brett Thompson, partner at Banner Public Affairs and CEO of Pork Barrel BBQ ... NYT's Kim Severson ... John Lippman, deputy director for programming at VOA ... Alex Botting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ... Pam Stevens ...

... **Courtney O'Donnell**, head of external affairs at Airbnb ... Ethan Klapper, global social media editor at HuffPost ... Peter Robbio, SVP at CRC ... Fox News alum Jim Angle ... Fred Schuster ... Jason Stverak ... James Faeh ... Edelman's Gavin Mathis ... Jason O'Malley ... Amazon's Allison Marshall ... Joseph Voss ... Anne Johnson ... lawyer Matthew Wald ... Erin Hood ... Russel Wade ... Chip Ward is 64. He's a big Terp fan and "thrilled that Maryland is off to a 2-0 start. His dad, Bob Ward, was consensus all-American football player there in early 50s" (h/t Jon) ... Bill Hayden ... Alison Harden Siciliano ... Allison Ramiller ... Nate Yohannes, director of business development at Microsoft and an Obama alum (h/t Sophia Kim) ... Tom Vilmain ... Alexandra Simbana (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** We need new rules for new 5G networks. New policies that will allow the U.S. to win the race to 5G and enable breakthrough advancements in healthcare, transportation, energy and more. First, a pipeline of low-, mid-, and high-band spectrum will help meet today's mobile needs and enable the 5G networks of tomorrow. Second, every level of government must modernize their rules for the building of small cell wireless infrastructure. Third, permanent and common sense federal regulations for interstate services like mobile broadband will preserve an open internet and protect consumer privacy while promoting innovation and investment. Finally, America's tax structure must be updated to spur billions of dollars in new 5G investment. Learn more about how wireless is working to invest in America's future at CTIA.org. *****

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To: Jason Abbruzzese[jason@mashable.com]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 3:52:09 PM
Subject: RE: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Jason Abbruzzese [mailto:jason@mashable.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:49 AM
To: Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Mashable media inquiry on Definers Public Affairs and the EPA

Greetings,

Jason Abbruzzese from Mashable here. I'm following up on the Mother Jones report that the EPA has been contracting Definers Public Affairs.

I'd love to know what kind of worker Definers has been doing for the EPA. Think someone could fill me in?

Cheers,

Jason

--

Jason Abbruzzese

News Editor

617 697 3390 (Cell, please text first)

Mashable

@JasonAbbruzzese

To: Halper, Evan[Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 9/26/2017 8:03:33 PM
Subject: RE: Here you go - let me know what else you need

When does or did your story run?

From: Halper, Evan [mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2017 11:30 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

got it. thanks,

From: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2017 11:29:47 AM
To: Halper, Evan
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

I have a minor typo -- should say Mr. Cox said he ...

On Sep 21, 2017, at 11:40 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in

the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. 'Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt's decision to partner with states to protect the environment. "Southerland questioned Pruitt's belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of 'running roughshod over states' rights." ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn't want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. "Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. 'We don't believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,' Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour." ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. "Trump's fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this

spring, as they traditionally have done.” ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House’s Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. “First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president’s budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.” ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama’s budget received 1 vote. “President Obama’s budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season.” ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama’s budget. “President Obama’s budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House’s rejection in March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama’s budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year.” ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress to ignore the budget. “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected priorities that “aren’t necessarily ours.” ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.

(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM

To: Press <Press@epa.gov>

Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Beach, Christopher[beach.christopher@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Abboud, Michael
Sent: Wed 4/18/2018 1:23:19 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: EPA News Highlights 4.18.18
EPA News Highlights 4.18.18.docx

EPA News Highlights 4.18.18

CNN: Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail. But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change. Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

The Huffington Post: EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was "standard practice since the Clinton administration." In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted. Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the "arrangement is nothing new."

Bloomberg BNA: EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get

direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements. The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater. "There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades," David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In. Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

Houston Business Journal: EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites. The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release. The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The Hill: Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos. The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions. Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

National News Highlights 4.18.18

The New York Times: Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday. Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo's mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at "extremely high levels," and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders. The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim's invitation to meet. Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

The Wall Street Journal: Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family. Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment. With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

The Associated Press: As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller. "We'll not be having this on the floor of the Senate," McConnell said on Fox News. His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it's simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do,

likening the legislation to “poking the bear.” The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump’s 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer’s office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is “an attack on our country” and is “corrupt.”

TRUMP TWEETS

CNN

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/17/politics/scott-pruitt-epa-track-record/index.html>

Key Steps That Administrator Scott Pruitt Has Taken At EPA

By Juana Summers, 4/18/18

Scott Pruitt's tenure as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency has been marked by stories scrutinizing his first-class travel on the taxpayer dime, his lease agreement in Washington and his use of a full-time security detail.

But Pruitt has also been a reliable ally for President Donald Trump, who made easing regulations on American industries a central campaign promise, and the EPA administrator has proposed a slew of rollbacks for major environmental rules, including those governing clean air and water and fighting climate change.

Put together, Pruitt's moves -- some of which have been challenged in court -- represent an attempt to fundamentally restructure the EPA's role in Washington, and are a sharp rebuke of the environmental legacy of former President Barack Obama.

Here are some of Pruitt's key changes:

Changing how the EPA approaches climate change

Like others in the Trump administration, Pruitt has repeatedly highlighted uncertainty about the role that humans have played in global warming, a view that is at odds with the vast majority of scientific evidence. Last month, the EPA circulated talking points instructing its staffers to say "clear gaps" exist in understanding whether human activity contributes to climate change. The EPA also removed references to climate change from several webpages, according to an analysis by the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative.

Rolling back car emissions standards

Pruitt announced in early April that he would revise Obama-era greenhouse gas emissions standards for automobiles, a move that undercut a signature part of Obama's efforts to fight climate change.

The weakening of automobile standards, which is a win for car manufacturers and a blow to environmentalists, also sets up a fight between the Trump administration and the state of California, which says it plans to stick with the stricter rules.

Proposing an overhaul of Obama-era initiatives on coal ash

In March, the EPA proposed changes to the Obama-era directive regulating coal ash waste, giving states and utilities more power to manage their own disposal of it. The proposal, according to The Washington Post, includes more than a dozen changes for how coal ash, which remains when coal is burned in power plants and electricity is generated, is stored at coal-fired power plants nationwide, and would let states change how frequently they test for groundwater contamination.

The decision was praised by industry officials who had called on Pruitt to revisit the rules, but environmental groups said he was caving to special interests in the coal industry.

Withdrawing regulations on 'major sources' of pollution

The EPA announced in January that it was withdrawing the "once-in always-in" policy under the Clean Air Act that dictated how major sources of hazardous air pollutants are regulated. The decades-old policy was opposed by fossil fuel companies, but environmental groups argued that its withdrawal would result in more pollution.

Suspending clean water rule

The EPA announced in January that it would suspend the Waters of the United States rule, which was designed to limit pollution in roughly 60% of the country's bodies of water. Critics said the rule was overly broad in classifying waterways that are subject to federal rules, while supporters see it as a necessary protection, for example, preventing fertilizer runoff from tainting streams and drinking water.

Withdrawing from Clean Power Plan

Pruitt announced in October his decision to withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, the Obama-era rule intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants across the country. The Clean Power Plan had a goal of decreasing the country's carbon pollution by roughly one-third by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Attempting to suspend an Obama-era methane rule

Under Pruitt, the EPA tried to suspend an Obama-era rule to restrict methane emissions from new oil and gas wells. But a federal court ruled in August that the EPA must enforce the Obama administration's regulation.

Pushing to withdraw the US from the Paris climate accord

Pruitt pushed the White House to leave the Paris climate deal, stood beside the President in the Rose Garden when he announced the decision and after the President spoke offered his own remarks. The move was condemned by global leaders and was seen by many as a setback to efforts to address global warming.

The Huffington Post

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/pruitt-emails-epa_us_5ad6701be4b03c426da92c1b

EPA Defends Scott Pruitt's Multiple Email Addresses As 'Standard Practice Since Clinton'

By Alexander Kaufman, 4/17/18

The Environmental Protection Agency defended embattled Administrator Scott Pruitt against Republican criticism Tuesday over his use of multiple email addresses, insisting it was “standard practice since the Clinton administration.”

In an email sent Thursday under that subject line, Jahan Wilcox, a top agency spokesman, said Pruitt only used one of his four email accounts for correspondence, while the others were used to receive emails from the general public and allow staff to manage his calendar. The fourth address, he said, was deleted.

Pruitt's email accounts, revealed five days ago by The Washington Post, raised concerns that the EPA failed to disclose emails linked to the secret accounts in public records requests. The controversy added to the rapidly cascading series of corruption scandals and ethical lapses that have caused dozens of Democrats and at least three Republican members of Congress to call for his resignation.

Wilcox listed the four email addresses Gina McCarthy, Pruitt's predecessor, used, and linked to a 2012 Politico story detailing a controversy over former Administrator Lisa Jackson's secondary email address. In that article, officials from former President George W. Bush's administration said the “arrangement is nothing new.”

But that didn't quell concerns from Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), a staunch supporter of the Trump administration's environmental agenda, who asked the Pruitt to "affirm that the EPA does in fact search all your official email accounts when responding to FOIA requests" in a letter sent to the administrator Friday.

"During your confirmation hearing, I specifically asked you to 'refrain from taking any action — that makes it difficult or impossible for the public to access your official written communications under the Freedom of Information Act,' " Barrasso wrote to Pruitt, according to a transcript published by The Hill and The Washington Post. "You agreed to my request."

After the Government Accountability Office released a report Monday saying that the \$43,000 the EPA spent on a soundproof phone booth for Pruitt was illegal, Barrasso escalated pressure on the administrator by demanding that he "give a full public accounting of this expenditure and explain why the agency thinks it was complying with the law."

In a separate memo, Wilcox outlined the agency's defenses on the phone booth and another controversy involving five-figure raises given to EPA political appointees under the Safe Drinking Water Act after the White House rejected requests to bump their salaries. The latter scandal blew up two weeks ago when Pruitt struggled to defend himself during a surprisingly aggressive Fox News interview.

Bloomberg BNA

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-to-clarify-when-cities-can-blend-wastewater-1>

EPA to Clarify When Cities Can Blend Wastewater

By Amena Saiyid, 4/17/18

City water systems inundated with stormwater and sewage during heavy rains will soon get direction from the EPA on when they can bypass pollution treatment requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to pursue a rulemaking that it hopes will end the confusion surrounding the practice of managing heavy volumes of wastewater.

“There has been lack of clarity about this issue for decades,” David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, announced April 18 to wastewater and water reuse officials at the opening session of the National Water Policy Fly-In.

Blending refers to the practice of routing a portion of incoming stormwater and sewage around a critical treatment process during heavy storms and then recombining it with treated flows before discharging it to receiving waters known as mixing zones. Utilities say they have to do this to prevent their treatment plants from being inundated during wet weather events that generate high volumes of wastewater.

The EPA’s ban on the practice of blending was struck down in 2013 by a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit decision. Since that ruling, the EPA has chosen to apply the Iowa League of Cities v. EPA in the seven states where the court had jurisdiction, a move that caused much confusion among cities and counties.

The states within the Eighth Circuit’s jurisdiction are Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

“I am not a huge fan of trying to solve through guidance, so we will roll up our sleeves and do rulemaking,” Ross said, adding to expect a proposal sometime this year.

Ross didn’t say whether the agency would apply the federal appellate ruling nationwide instead of on a case-by-case basis outside the Eighth Circuit. The EPA did acknowledge that it wants to provide regulatory certainty to wastewater facilities so they can “optimize” wastewater treatment during wet weather. That will protect both water quality and public health in the communities they serve.

“We are at the very start of the rulemaking process,” Andrew Sawyers, director of EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, told Bloomberg Environment on the sidelines of the session.

Sawyers said he didn't want to get ahead of the agency by stating what direction the rulemaking would take. Rather, he emphasized that it would be crafted after engaging with the municipalities that have been affected by the EPA's past policy.

Cautiously Hopeful

Water and wastewater utilities have been discussing the practice of blending with the EPA and state regulatory agencies for three decades, Rajendra Bhattarai, division manager for Austin Water Utility's environmental and regulatory services, told Bloomberg Environment, adding the rulemaking has been a "long time" in the making.

Bhattarai said he hopes the EPA's upcoming rule provides direction on when and how blending should be used.

"It should not be abused, but only be used when needed to avoid damaging the plant's treatment systems, while protecting public health and environment," Bhattarai said.

Likewise, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, which represents municipal-owned utilities, wants the EPA to provide clarity around wet weather treatment practices.

"We just don't know enough about it yet or what they want to do," Nathan Gardner-Andrews, the association's chief advocacy officer, told Bloomberg Environment.

Houston Business Journal

<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2018/04/17/epa-removes-houston-area-waste-pits-from-list-of.html>

EPA Removes Houston-Area Waste Pits From List Of Superfund Sites 'Targeted For Immediate, Intense Action'

By Olivia Pulsinelli, 4/17/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has removed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits near Houston and a copper mine in Nevada from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's so-called "Emphasis List" of Superfund sites.

The list identifies sites that will benefit from Pruitt's "targeted immediate and intense attention," according to the EPA's April 16 press release. Initially released last December in response to the Superfund Task Force Recommendations, the list is expected to be revised quarterly, per the release.

The removal comes a week after other news regarding the San Jacinto River Waste Pits. On April 9, the EPA announced an agreement has been reached with Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper Co. (NYSE: IP) and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corp., which are the companies responsible for the site, per the Texas Tribune. MIMC is a subsidiary of Houston-based Waste Management Inc. (NYSE: WM).

The companies initially opposed the cleanup plan that was approved in October, but they have now agreed to foot the \$115 million bill, per the Tribune. The plan includes installing engineering controls before excavating approximately 212,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated material for disposal, per the April 9 release. The remedial design is expected to take about 29 months, and International Paper Co. and MIMC will perform the design work under the oversight of the EPA and the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality. While the remedial design is underway, the U.S. Department of Justice and the EPA will begin negotiating with the potential responsible parties regarding construction of the remedy, per the April 9 release.

Quarterly inspection and maintenance of the existing temporary cap will continue during the process, per the release.

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site consists of two sets of pits, called impoundments, built in the mid-1960s. They were used to dispose of solid and liquid pulp and paper mill wastes contaminated with dioxins and furans but were covered with an armored cap as a temporary containment method in 2011. The 14-acre northern set of impoundments is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, north of the Interstate 10 bridge, and is partially submerged. The southern impoundment covers less than 20 acres on a small peninsula south of the I-10 bridge.

The site was added to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites in 2008.

The Hill

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/383661-trumps-epa-quietly-revamps-rules-for-air-pollution>

Trump's EPA Quietly Revamps Rules For Air Pollution

By Tim Cama, 4/18/18

The Trump administration has quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos.

The memos are fulfilling the top wishes of industry, which has long called for changes to how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation's factories, plants and other facilities. The EPA is now allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations and is letting companies use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions.

Environmentalists and public health advocates say the memos could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides. They accuse the EPA of avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.

"All of these, individually and taken together, will result in more air pollution and less enforcement of the Clean Air Act," said Paul Billings, senior vice president for advocacy at the American Lung Association.

"These were radical departures of current law when they were proposed a decade ago and they're just as radical today," he said, referring to the Bush-era efforts, some of which were unsuccessful, to make changes to EPA air programs.

But for the EPA and its supporters, the memos simply bring the agency back to what the relevant laws and regulations are meant to be.

“They address specific concerns that people have had for years, and just make it much simpler for people to comply — especially for existing [facilities] — to make sure they can maintain their plants and replace worn-out components and those types of things, without the threat of enforcement litigation,” said Jeff Holmstead, a former head of the EPA’s air pollution office under the George W. Bush administration who now represents regulated companies at the law and lobbying firm Bracewell.

Bill Wehrum, head of the air office under EPA chief Scott Pruitt, wrote two of the three EPA memos. He recused himself from the third memo, which Pruitt wrote.

The first memo, issued in December, states that the EPA will no longer “second guess” companies’ calculations of their expected pollution output after certain big projects under what is known as New Source Review. Under that program, the EPA reviews the changes made to a facility to decide whether they need to go through the same process as if the facility were newly built.

The December memo effectively means the EPA will usually not take action against a company for its calculations if they turn out to be wrong.

The second memo, issued in January, repeals a Clinton-era policy known as “once in, always in.” Under the previous policy, facilities could never be considered “minor” sources of hazardous pollution if they were already considered “major” sources, and subject to much stricter rules.

Now, facilities can be regulated as “minor” if their emissions drop enough.

The third memo allows companies to use a procedure known as “project netting” when applying for permits for major projects under the New Source Review program. That means companies can use a more industry-friendly emissions calculation when they argue that a particular project

would reduce emissions.

President Trump added to the memos last week, signing one himself that formally asks the EPA to use more industry-friendly practices in enforcing the National Ambient Air Quality Standards program, a key Clean Air Act program for air quality nationwide.

John Walke, director for clean air at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the EPA is working to implement the policies the Bush administration failed to finish.

“I think Mr. Wehrum has decided this is likely a one-term administration and he’s going to devote his full resources to rolling back clean air, climate and public health protections in the time available to him,” Walke said.

“The most expedient and hasty way to accomplish those rollbacks is through the regular guidance documents that we have seen so far from EPA,” he said. “Rulemakings take time, they require public notice and input and hearings, and Mr. Wehrum and Mr. Pruitt plainly have no patience for those tedious foddors.”

Walke said that, taken together, the memos could allow polluting facilities to greatly increase their emissions.

The EPA didn’t respond to requests for comment.

The focus among the memos for environmental and health advocates is the one repealing the “once in, always in” policy, and letting “major” pollution sources reduce their emissions and be regulated as “minor” ones.

A coalition of environmental groups sued the EPA to stop the policy change, arguing that it should have gone through the full regulatory process, including analysis of its environmental impact and an opportunity for public comment. Democratic states joined in with their own

lawsuit.

“Instead of prioritizing the health of hard-working Americans, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt wants to let major polluters off the hook. That is unconscionable, and it is illegal,” said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D).

“If the ‘Once In, Always In’ policy is rescinded, children in California and around the country — particularly those who must live near the polluting plant or factory — may grow up in an environment with tons of additional hazardous pollutants in the air they breathe. California will not allow that to happen,” Becerra said.

Two environmental groups opposed to the EPA’s move have put out recent analyses of the change, focused on specific areas of the country.

The Environmental Integrity Project looked at 12 industrial plants in the Midwest and concluded they could increase their pollution to 540,000 pounds annually, a fourfold growth.

The Environmental Defense Fund looked at the Houston area, and said that 18 facilities there could increase their emissions to 900,000 pounds a year, two and a half times current levels.

Holmstead said opponents of the Trump administration’s policy are unlikely to prevail. The Supreme Court ruled in the 2015 *Perez v. Mortgage Bankers Association* case that federal agencies can repeal policy memos with other policy memos and don’t have to go through the full regulatory process to do so.

“I think the environmental groups are going to have a real uphill battle trying to get through court that this is somehow improper,” he said. “That really does fly in the face of the *Perez* decision.”

As for the increase in emissions, Holmstead said environmentalists are wrong. In many cases, the

new policies will allow facilities to carry out projects that reduce emissions, or simply operate under a lower paperwork burden.

“They have yet to come up with any real-world examples of how that might happen,” Holmstead said of the scenarios in which pollution might increase. “These reforms are not going to lead to pollution increases.

“I don’t think that there will be a meaningful impact one way or another.”

The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/world/asia/trump-japan-north-korea-summit-talks.html>

Mike Pompeo, C.I.A. Director, Met With Kim Jong-Un In North Korea

By Mark Lander and Matt Rosenberg, 4/17/18

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump dispatched the C.I.A. director Mike Pompeo to North Korea to meet with its leader, Kim Jong-un, in recent weeks to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, two people briefed on the secret trip said on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump alluded to Mr. Pompeo’s mission when he said on Tuesday afternoon that the United States was in direct talks with North Korea at “extremely high levels,” and that the White House was looking at five sites for a potential meeting of the two leaders.

The White House has used intelligence, rather than diplomatic channels, to communicate with North Korea, ever since last month, when Mr. Trump unexpectedly accepted Mr. Kim’s invitation to meet.

Mr. Pompeo, who is awaiting confirmation as secretary of state, has been dealing with North Korean representatives through a channel that runs between the C.I.A. and its North Korean

counterpart, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, according to other officials. And he has been in close touch with the director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, Suh Hoon, who American officials said brokered Mr. Kim's invitation to Mr. Trump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump also said he would give his blessing to North and South Korea to "discuss the end of the war" when the leaders of those countries meet this month, opening the door to a peace treaty that would replace the armistice that halted the Korean War in 1953.

His statements, which came as he welcomed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to his oceanfront estate here, were fresh evidence of a diplomatic thaw underway on the Korean Peninsula, and made a once-unthinkable encounter between him and Mr. Kim far more likely.

The president did not specify who in his administration was talking to North Korea, nor did he give any hint of the sites under consideration — adding to the aura of mystery that has enveloped this potential meeting. The Washington Post first reported Mr. Pompeo's trip, which took place over Easter.

But his comments could raise other thorny issues. A peace treaty with North Korea would greatly increase pressure to ease economic sanctions on the North and to withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula. It would also complicate the already tangled diplomacy in East Asia.

In his meeting with Mr. Abe, however, Mr. Trump projected optimism. He described North Korea in language worlds away from the speech he gave in November in Seoul, when he called it cruel and barbaric, "the results of a tragic experiment in a laboratory of history."

"I really believe there's a lot of good will," Mr. Trump said. "They do respect us. We are respectful of them."

He even suggested that the North and the South might announce some kind of deal before he met Mr. Kim.

On Tuesday, a South Korean newspaper, Munhwa Ilbo, reported that the two countries were negotiating an announcement “to ease military tensions and end a military confrontation,” as part of the summit meeting planned between Mr. Kim and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea.

That could involve pulling troops out of the Demilitarized Zone, making it a genuinely “Demilitarized Zone.” A South Korean government official later played down the report, saying it was too soon to tell what a joint statement by Mr. Moon and Mr. Kim would contain, other than broad and “abstract” statements about the need for North Korea to “denuclearize.”

But analysts said South Korea was aiming for a comprehensive deal, in which the North agreed to give up its weapons in return for a security guarantee, including a peace treaty. Mr. Trump’s comments suggested he backed that effort.

“They do have my blessing to discuss the end of the war,” he said. “People don’t realize that the Korean War has not ended. It’s going on right now. And they are discussing an end to war. Subject to a deal, they have my blessing.”

While Mr. Abe lavished praise on Mr. Trump for the sanctions campaign, which he said had brought North Korea to the table, he did not repeat the president’s words about an end to the Korean War.

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“Donald,” he said, “you’ve demonstrated your unwavering determination in addressing the challenge of North Korea.”

Mr. Abe said only that he hoped that the talks with Mr. Kim would force the North to address the threats posed by its nuclear and missile programs, as well as its abduction of Japanese citizens — a politically resonant issue in Japan that Mr. Trump promised to raise with Mr. Kim.

“Abe put on a surprisingly brave face,” said Michael J. Green, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who advised President George W. Bush on North Korea. “The president of the United States just endorsed a peace treaty with North Korea, a declared nuclear weapons state, and they offered nothing in return.”

China, which is a signer to the 1953 armistice, has long favored a peace treaty. But Japan, which did not sign it, is suspicious of one — as are some foreign policy experts in the United States, who point out that the North has yet to take any tangible steps to give up its nuclear arsenal.

The idea of a peace treaty is not new. The United States and North Korea discussed it in the 1990s and again in 2005. But it has never gone anywhere, largely because North Korea has reneged on pledges to give up its nuclear program.

Most scholars and officials agree that North and South Korea cannot themselves announce an end to the Korean War. It has to involve the United States and China as well, since both were signers to the armistice.

In welcoming Mr. Abe to his estate, Mar-a-Lago, for two days of meetings, Mr. Trump clearly hoped to change the subject from tampered documents, confiscated legal files and other symbols of the political storm clouds that hover over both leaders back home.

After days of ominous reports about his personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, and unflattering descriptions in a new book by James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director he ousted, Mr. Trump appeared to savor the prospect of discussing trade and the nuclear threat from North Korea with Mr. Abe, whom he described in Twitter as a “truly fine gentleman.”

The stakes are even higher for Mr. Abe, whose political survival is in doubt after two domestic scandals have sapped his approval ratings and raised questions about whether he will be forced to resign.

Mr. Abe has invested heavily in his relationship with Mr. Trump, whom he first visited at Trump Tower even before he was sworn in. Preserving that relationship, in the face of fresh challenges in trade and from North Korea, could affect Mr. Abe's standing in Japan.

The White House sought to put a good face on the meeting, describing Japan as a great ally of the United States and Mr. Abe as a friend of Mr. Trump. But officials acknowledged there would be differences over trade, with Mr. Trump pushing for a trade deal between the two countries and Mr. Abe stung by Mr. Trump's decision not to exempt Japan, like other American allies, from sweeping tariffs on steel exports.

"We have certain disagreements with respect to some of the trading issues," Larry Kudlow, Mr. Trump's chief economic adviser, told reporters before the meeting. "We'll iron those out, hopefully."

Mr. Kudlow said he expected Mr. Abe to petition Mr. Trump to grant Japan an exemption, but declined to predict how he would respond. He also tamped down expectations about the United States rejoining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade pact, now anchored by Japan, which Mr. Trump pulled out of during his first week in office.

"We are in the pre-preliminary stages of any discussions," he said. "It's more of a thought than a policy."

Having met six times — including once before at Mar-a-Lago — and spoken by phone 20 times, Mr. Trump and Mr. Abe were likely to talk about the issues dogging them at home, officials said. But American officials said they did not believe that would dominate their discussions.

"It's all part and parcel of the relationship," said Matthew Pottinger, the senior director for Asia at the National Security Council. "Sometimes they talk about the respective politics in each other's countries. They enjoy talking about it."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/barbara-bush-dies-at-age-92-1524008885>

Barbara Bush Dies At Age 92

By Gerald Seib, 4/17/18

Barbara Pierce Bush went from a privileged childhood to become the wife of one president and mother of another, serving throughout as a pugnacious guardian of what had become America's most prominent political family.

Mrs. Bush died Tuesday at the family's home in Houston at the age of 92, a family spokesman said, with her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, at her side. Her death came two days after the spokesman said she was in failing health and had decided not to seek additional medical treatment.

With her white hair and string of pearls, Mrs. Bush was an instantly recognizable national figure, particularly after the election in 1988 of her husband as the nation's 41st president. Unlike some political spouses, she never claimed to have strong political views or an agenda of her own, though she started a well-regarded program to promote national literacy.

Instead, the nation came to know her as the widely admired and humorous matron of a large and expanding extended family, which gathered regularly at its compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, for seemingly endless rounds of boating, fishing and golf.

She also proved more combative and less forgiving than her husband in challenging political foes or perceived press slights, and appeared more embittered by his loss in a re-election bid in 1992. When meeting her successor as first lady, Hillary Clinton, she pointed to the reporters watching them and declared: "Avoid this crowd like the plague. And if they quote you, make damn sure they heard you."

Barbara Bush, Former First Lady, Dies at Age 92

Former first lady Barbara Bush has died at the age of 92. She was the wife of 41st president George H.W. Bush, mother of 43rd president, George W. Bush, and 2016 candidate Jeb Bush. During and after her time in the White House she championed the cause of improving literacy rates among Americans. Photo: Reuters

After the Bushes left the White House, one of their children, George W. Bush, became governor of Texas and another, Jeb, became governor of Florida. She strongly supported both, as she did the candidacy of George W. Bush when he was elected president in 2000.

Ahead of Jeb Bush mounting his own, ultimately unsuccessful campaign for the presidency, Mrs. Bush didn't sound enthusiastic about seeing her family through political wars, famously declaring that "we've had enough Bushes" in the White House. Once he entered the 2016 race, however, she became a visible supporter.

Barbara Bush was born Barbara Pierce in 1925 and grew up in the suburban town of Rye, N.Y. Her father, Marvin, was a successful business executive who became president of McCall Corp.

She was attending a boarding school in South Carolina when, during a visit back home over Christmas break, she met her future husband, then a senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., at a dance. She was 16 years old. They became engaged a year and a half later.

World War II intervened to delay the wedding, however. Her fiancé went off to the Pacific as a U.S. Navy torpedo-bomber pilot, where he was shot down and rescued.

When he returned on leave, Barbara Pierce dropped out of Smith College, and they were married in 1945. Later, she recalled: "I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell my children that they just about throw up."

After her husband graduated from Yale, the two moved to Texas, where he launched into the oil business and she managed a growing family. Tragedy struck when their daughter Robin, not yet

four, died of leukemia. The loss led to a lifelong Bush family devotion to the cause of cancer research.

Her husband veered into politics and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, beginning a steady climb up the political ladder. He went on to become ambassador to the United Nations, envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice president and then president.

Throughout, Mrs. Bush was the crucial, supportive spouse. By her count, she managed some 30 moves by the Bush family.

After the biggest of those moves, into the White House, she said the nation came to see her as “everybody’s grandma,” and she enjoyed a burst of popularity. In a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll taken in early 1992, 70% of Americans said they had a positive view of her—25 points higher than those who had positive views of her husband.

When Mr. Bush was voted out of office, the couple retreated to their longtime home in Houston, while continuing their annual summer trips to Kennebunkport. She remained active in the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

She largely sought to stay out of the national political debate, though she emerged in 2016 to appear with her son Jeb in a joint interview with CBS News designed to promote his campaign.

In that, she offered him this typically pointed critique of his debate performances: “He’s almost too polite...If I gave him advice I would say ‘Why don’t you interrupt like the other people do?’” Then, without naming Donald Trump, she got in a dig at the man who ultimately prevailed in that campaign by comparing her son favorably to him: “He does not brag like some people we know.”

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/bfb5ad674ccc4f90b75b5f790d30eb89/As-GOP-balks,-McConnell-shuts->

down-bill-to-protect-Mueller

As GOP Balks, McConnell Shuts Down Bill To Protect Mueller

By Mary Clare Jalonick, 4/18/18

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday thwarted a bipartisan effort to protect special counsel Robert Mueller’s job, saying he will not hold a floor vote on the legislation even if it is approved next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

McConnell said the bill is unnecessary because President Donald Trump will not fire Mueller.

“We’ll not be having this on the floor of the Senate,” McConnell said on Fox News.

His comments came amid widespread opposition to the bill among members of his caucus, with several GOP senators saying the bill is unconstitutional. Others said it’s simply not good politics to try and tell Trump what to do, likening the legislation to “poking the bear.”

The bipartisan legislation was introduced last week as Trump publicly criticized Mueller, who is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump’s 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president. Trump, fuming about a raid of his personal lawyer’s office by a different division of the FBI, said last week that the Mueller investigation is “an attack on our country” and is “corrupt.”

Trump has also privately pondered firing Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is overseeing Mueller’s investigation.

Within a day of Trump’s criticism, Republicans Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina combined two bills they introduced last summer to protect special counsels. They introduced the new bill along with Democratic Sens. Chris Coons of Delaware and Cory Booker of New Jersey, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, announced that his committee would vote on the bill.

The legislation would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing, and would put into law existing Justice Department regulations that require a firing to be for “good cause.”

Democrats immediately jumped on the legislation, but many Republicans have been cool to it.

At least three of the 11 GOP members of the Judiciary panel have said they will vote against it and another five have said they have questions about its constitutionality. Grassley is one of those with concerns, but said he felt obligated to hold a vote.

Republicans off the committee had questions too — and some acknowledged that it could be politically difficult.

South Dakota Sen. Mike Rounds said Tuesday that Trump should make the decision on his own and be responsible for the consequences.

“I think having Congress tell him what we believe he should do in this case is simply poking the bear, and I’d just prefer not to do that,” Rounds said.

Oklahoma Sen. Jim Lankford said the bill is a “political distraction.”

“You create this whole constitutional political stir over something that is not going to happen,” he said.

Others said there was little point.

“It’s about as popular as cholera with the leader in the Senate and it’s about as popular as malaria in the House,” said Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a member of the Judiciary panel. “I think most people think we’re picking an unnecessary fight with the president.”

Coons bristled at the criticism that the legislation is unconstitutional, noting that several courts have upheld similar special counsel statutes.

“If I were convinced this were unconstitutional, I would not be moving it,” said Coons, a lawyer.

At a September hearing on the two separate bills, before they were combined, scholars were divided on whether the bills were constitutional, with some voicing concerns that allowing the judicial branch that authority over an executive decision may not pass muster in the courts.

“I think it’s probably unconstitutional and I don’t think there’s any realistic chance that the president will fire Mr. Mueller,” Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate and the former Texas attorney general, said Tuesday.

McConnell agreed, adding that Trump would never support the legislation.

“Just as a practical matter, even if we pass it, why would he sign it?” McConnell said in the Fox interview.

Republicans who have talked to the White House almost uniformly have held the line that Trump will not fire Mueller or Rosenstein — including Tillis and Graham, who say they are pushing the legislation because it would be good policy under any president.

“I don’t think he’s going to fire Mueller, but I think institutionally it would be nice to have some protections,” Graham said Tuesday.

Tillis acknowledged last week that he had taken some “heat” from conservatives for the bill, but told the Judiciary panel, “this is really an opportunity to take an ethical stand, and not do it when the situation benefits you.”

Democrats said Republicans opposed to the legislation were simply protecting Trump.

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said the argument over constitutionality is a “red herring used by some of my colleagues as a pretext for opposing the bill, when they really have other reasons.” He gave no specifics.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said the special counsel bill is “so much more” than another policy debate.

“I think this will be one that history will judge us all,” Warner said.

TRUMP TWEETS



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 1h

Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!

15K 6.6K 26K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!

5.4K 12K 41K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

A sketch years later about a nonexistent man. A total con job, playing the Fake News Media for Fools (but they know it)!



Deplorably Scottish @ShennaFoxMusic

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

Oops! This is awkward!
@StormyDaniels's Ex 🙄
#IDTheThug

11K 7.7K 25K



Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 3h

There is a Revolution going on in California. Soooo many Sanctuary areas want OUT of this ridiculous, crime infested & breeding concept. Jerry Brown is trying to back out of the National Guard at the Border, but the people of the State are not happy. Want Security & Safety NOW!

8.2K 11K 44K

To: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Hupp, Sydney[hupp.sydney@epa.gov]; Beck, Nancy[beck.nancy@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]; Bolen, Brittany[bolen.brittany@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Brown, Byron[brown.byron@epa.gov]; Chmielewski, Kevin[chmielewski.kevin@epa.gov]; Davis, Patrick[davis.patrick@epa.gov]; Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]; Fotouhi, David[fotouhi.david@epa.gov]; Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Greaves, Holly[greaves.holly@epa.gov]; Greenwalt, Sarah[greenwalt.sarah@epa.gov]; Gunasekara, Mandy[Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov]; Hale, Michelle[hale.michelle@epa.gov]; Hupp, Millan[hupp.millan@epa.gov]; Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]; Kelly, Albert[kelly.albert@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]; McMurray, Forrest[mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov]; Munoz, Charles[munoz.charles@epa.gov]; Palich, Christian[palich.christian@epa.gov]; Ringel, Aaron[ringel.aaron@epa.gov]; Schwab, Justin[schwab.justin@epa.gov]; Wagner, Kenneth[wagner.kenneth@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Ford, Hayley
Sent: Mon 5/22/2017 3:06:02 PM
Subject: 30-Day White House Cabinet Report
EPA Cabinet 30 Day Report 5.16.17.docx

Please send your updates to the 30-day White House Cabinet report by COB today. Attached is last week's submission. For items where you are listed as the contact, please make sure any relevant updates are made.

Thank you!

Hayley Ford

Deputy White House Liaison

Office of the Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

Room: 3309C William Jefferson Clinton North

ford.hayley@epa.gov

Phone: 202-564-2022

Cell: 202-306-1296

From: Hupp, Sydney

Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 8:09 AM

To: Beck, Nancy <Beck.Nancy@epa.gov>; Bennett, Tate <Bennett.Tate@epa.gov>; Bolen, Brittany <bolen.brittany@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Brown, Byron <brown.byron@epa.gov>; Chmielewski, Kevin <chmielewski.kevin@epa.gov>; Davis, Patrick <davis.patrick@epa.gov>; Dravis, Samantha <dravis.samantha@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Ford, Hayley <ford.hayley@epa.gov>; Fotouhi, David <fotouhi.david@epa.gov>; Freire, JP <Freire.JP@epa.gov>; Graham, Amy <graham.amy@epa.gov>; Greaves, Holly <greaves.holly@epa.gov>; Greenwalt, Sarah <greenwalt.sarah@epa.gov>; Gunasekara, Mandy <Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov>; Hale, Michelle <hale.michelle@epa.gov>; Hupp, Millan <hupp.millan@epa.gov>; Hupp, Sydney <hupp.sydney@epa.gov>; Jackson, Ryan <jackson.ryan@epa.gov>; Kelly, Albert <kelly.albert@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Lyons, Troy <lyons.troy@epa.gov>; McMurray, Forrest <mcmurray.forrest@epa.gov>; Munoz, Charles <munoz.charles@epa.gov>; Palich, Christian <palich.christian@epa.gov>; Ringel, Aaron <ringel.aaron@epa.gov>; Schwab, Justin <schwab.justin@epa.gov>; Wagner, Kenneth <wagner.kenneth@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Budget Info From Holly

Good morning! Attached is a draft summary document of the 2018 EPA President's Budget, called the Budget in Brief. This is still internal, pre-deliberative, and NOT to be shared until after the budget is released on Tuesday.

Thank you!

Sydney Hupp

Executive Scheduler

Office of the Administrator

202.816.1659 (c)

May 16, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF SECRETARY AND CABINET SECRETARY

FROM: Ryan Jackson, Chief of Staff, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

SUBJECT: Environmental Protection Agency Weekly Update for the Week of May 22, 2017

EPA 30-Day Policy Look Ahead

A. Rulemakings, Guidance, Initiatives, & Policies

1. **GRANT RECONSIDERATION FOR OIL AND GAS NSPS:** Consistent with Executive Order 13783 and EPA's announced review of the 2016 Oil and Gas New Source Performance Standard on March 28, 2017 at 82 FR 16331, EPA will grant a full reconsideration of the rule alongside a 90-stay of a pending compliance deadline. EPA will work with impacted stakeholders to develop a more balanced approach that ensures adequate protection of the environment without stifling the ever-expanding oil and gas industry. **Timing:** Publish in the Federal Register by the end of May **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov
2. **WITHDRAWAL OF CLEAN POWER PLAN TO OMB FOR REVIEW:** Consistent with Executive Order 13783 and EPA's announced review of the Clean Power Plan on March 28, 2017 at 82 FR 16329, EPA will send a proposed withdrawal of the rule to the Office of Management and Budget for review. EPA is also working with the Department of Justice to respond to the D.C. Circuit Court's request for a response to either hold the associated litigation in abeyance or remand the rule back to EPA. **Timing:** 1 to 2 weeks to send draft to OMB; Briefing with OMB scheduled for Week of May 15, 2017 **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov
3. **WITHDRAWAL OF 2015 WOTUS RULE TO OMB FOR REVIEW:** Consistent with Executive Order 13778, EPA submitted to OMB a proposed rule withdrawing the 2015 definition of "Waters of the United States." EPA will implement the Executive Order through a two-step process—first, withdrawing the 2015 rule and re-codifying the status quo; and second, reviewing and revising the definition consistent with this administration's policy. **Timing:** 30 days for OMB review **Contact:** Sarah Greenwalt, Senior Advisor, Greenwalt.Sarah@epa.gov
4. **LETTER ANNOUNCING GRANT OF RECONSIDERATION FOR MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS NSPS AND EMISSION GUIDELINES:** Consistent with Executive Order 13783, EPA will send a letter to industry petitioners announcing an intention to grant reconsideration of the NSPS rule and existing source guidelines for municipal solid waste landfills. The previous administration attempted to layer new and unnecessary regulations as part of its climate action plan to address methane. This announcement prevents states from expending resources to comply with a May 20, 2017, deadline that will be administratively stayed alongside the formal grant of reconsideration.

EPA can respond to primary concerns including lack of regulatory flexibility, legal obstacles and duplicative standards associated with the petitioners' request.

Timing: Letter sent to petitioners on May 9, 2017; Draft Federal Register notice developed over the next 2 to 3 weeks **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov

5. **PROPOSED RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD 2018 RVOs RULE TO OMB.** Under the Renewable Fuel Standard, EPA is required to set annual Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs), which determines the amount of biofuels that must be blended into the market by obligated parties. The final RVO is required to be set by November 30th each year. In a commitment to meet this annual deadline, EPA sent the draft Rule to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on May 11.
Timing: May 11, 2017 **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.mandy@epa.gov
6. **STAY OF COMPLIANCE DEADLINES FOR EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS GUIDELINES for STEAM ELECTRIC POWER GENERATING UNITS.** EPA is proposing to stay compliance deadlines in the effluent limitations guidelines and standards for the steam electric point source category under the Clean Water Act. These include limitations and pretreatment standards for fly ash transport water, bottom ash transport water, flue gas desulfurization wastewater, flue gas mercury control wastewater, and gasification wastewater. The stay will remain in effect until EPA completes reconsideration of the Rule. EPA received seven petitions for review of the underlying rule establishing these effluent limitations guidelines, which were consolidated in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Upon EPA's request, that Court issued an order staying proceedings until August 12, 2017.
Timing: Submitted to OMB May 10, 2017; pending OMB review **Contact:** Sarah Greenwalt, Senior Advisor, Greenwalt.Sarah@epa.gov
7. **GUIDANCE FOR COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUALS PERMIT PROGRAMS:** EPA is working with the Environmental Council of States and Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Agencies develop guidance for how EPA plans to review and approve state permit programs for management of coal combustion residuals in response to WIIN Act.
Timing: By end of May **Contact:** Byron Brown, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, brown.byron@epa.gov
8. **SUPERFUND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS:** Under the direction of the Administrator, EPA is directing a new retention of delegated remedy authority to improve the operation and effectiveness of the Superfund program. The effect of this action accentuates the Administrator's high level of emphasis on expeditious resolution of and attention to all Superfund sites. The directive more intensely involves the Administrator in the approved manner of remediation particularly on sites in excess of \$50M in remediation expense. The Administrator will be announcing the formation of a Task Force to highly focus on the Superfund resolution mechanisms, processes and procedures to more expeditiously find solutions and remedies so as to protect the public health and return properties to

productive use. The Task Force will identify tools both new and in use which can be refined and utilized to accomplish the directives set out.

Timing: A report showing strategic direction to develop and implement these actions will be produced. Deadline for this report is June 19, 2017. **Contact:** Albert Kelly, Senior Advisor, Kelly.Albert@epa.gov

9. **REGISTRATION DECISION TO GRANT NEW PLANT INCORPORATED PROTECTANT (PIP) MON87411 FOR COMMERCIAL USE.** MON 87411 RNAi corn is an emerging technology and important tool for farmers to help combat corn rootworm resistance to Bt crops. RNAi works as a pesticide by silencing the activity of a targeted gene. Commercial registrations of RNAi-based plant-incorporated protectant (PIP) crops to date have targeted plant pathogens such as the plum pox virus. MON 87411 is the first RNAi-based PIP to target an insect pest. EPA registered MON 87411 for breeding uses in October 2015 and March 2017, and anticipates granting commercial use in June 2017.

Timing: June 9, 2017 **Contact:** Nancy Beck, Deputy Assistant Administrator for OCSPP, beck.nancy@epa.gov

10. **HUDSON RIVER FIVE-YEAR REVIEW.** EPA plans to publicly release its second five-year review report for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site. The release of the report will include the announcement of a 30-day public comment period.

Timing: Next 30 days **Contact:** Walter Mugdan, Acting Deputy Regional Administrator, EPA Region 2, Mugdan.Walter@epa.gov

B. Reports to Congress

1. **2016 SUPERFUND REPORT TO CONGRESS:** Consistent with CERCLA section 121(c), Executive Order 12580 and the National Contingency Plan, EPA is responsible for reviewing Superfund remedial actions at least every five years where contaminants remain on site above levels that allow for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure. EPA prepares an annual report to Congress providing a list of sites and information about sites where additional work is required.

Timing: Anticipate going to OMB around May 26, 2017; After OMB completes review, EPA will submit to the Hill **Contact:** Jim Woolford, Director, Office of Superfund Remediation, Woolford.james@epa.gov

C. State and Local-Based Issues

1. **ALL STATES: Formal Federalism Consultation on WOTUS Rewrite.** On April 10, 2017, EPA initiated formal federalism consultation on drafting a revised definition of "Waters of the United States." Throughout this process EPA will reach out to each of the States and state associations, and local governments and their associations to solicit feedback on how best to draft a definition of "Waters of the United States" that is clear and easily implemented.

Timing: Initiated on April 10, 2017; federalism comments due by June 19, 2017; and

internal summary of comments to be completed by July 19, 2017 **Contact:** Sarah Greenwalt, Senior Advisor, Greenwalt.Sarah@epa.gov.

2. **ALL STATES: Administrator Pruitt to send Letter to Governors announcing delay of ozone implementation:** Administrator Pruitt will send a letter to all Governors announcing a 1-year extension to the designation deadline for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone. Many areas still struggle to meet the standard set in 2008, yet the previous administration moved ahead with setting a more stringent standard that would expand the reach of the federal EPA into local economic development decisions across the country. The 1-year delay will allow the EPA to provide regulatory relief while also developing a plan to provide compliance alternatives with the states.
Timing: Send letter announcing delay and plan to develop compliance alternatives first week of June **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov
3. **NORTH DAKOTA: Administrator Pruitt Announced North Dakota Class VI Well Permit.** This came after meeting with Members of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation the week of May 1st on Capitol Hill.
Timing: May 9, 2017 **Contact:** Tate Bennett, Senior Deputy Associate Administrator, OCIR, Bennett.Elizabeth@epa.gov
4. **ALASKA:** As part of the effort to reestablish meaningful cooperative federalism, EPA HQ will work with Alaska to develop a workable path to improve compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). EPA is considering new compliance flexibility to ensure meaningful environmental improvements while avoiding a never-ending cycle of noncompliance.
Timing: Develop path forward with state week of May 15 **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.Mandy@epa.gov
5. **TEXAS:** For years, EPA has been attempting to negotiate with Texas Council on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regarding nonattainment (i.e. noncompliance) designation of areas for the 2006 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂). Consistent with the renewed commitment to cooperative federalism, EPA will meet with TCEQ to develop a plan that allows the state the time to put in place an SO₂ monitoring network to ensure the states' compliance is based on measured data instead of projected, modeling data.
Timing: Plan in place by week of May 22, 2017 **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior Policy Adviser, Gunasekara.mandy@epa.gov
6. **EPA COORDINATING WITH DOI/DOE ON NAVAJO GENERATING STATION:** EPA is working with DOE, DOI and other current owners to develop a plan to keep the Navajo Generating Station running, which is a key source of employment for the local Navajo tribe. Specifically, EPA is developing a flexible path forward on a previously finalized Regional Haze Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) to keep all three plant units running through 2019 and maintain workable options for longer-term requirements for any prospective, new owners.
Timing: Solidify flexible pathway in 1 to 2 weeks **Contact:** Mandy Gunasekara, Senior

D. Legal Decisions

1. **PEBBLE LIMITED PARTNERSHIP LITIGATION - SETTLED**. EPA reached a settlement late last week with Pebble Mine Partnership, putting an end to lengthy, high-profile litigation inherited from the last administration. The litigation arose from EPA's so-called "preemptive veto" of the Pebble Mine project – before Pebble submitted its permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Obama EPA issued a "proposed determination" of the environmental effect of the project which, if finalized, would have effectively prevented the project from moving forward. Under the settlement, EPA will begin the procedure specified in its regulations to consider whether to withdraw the proposed determination. Additionally, in no event will EPA take the next step in its review process until 48 months from the date of settlement or until the Army Corps issues its final Environmental Impact Statement, whichever comes first. In exchange, Pebble will withdraw with prejudice its claims under the Freedom of Information Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as well as its request for attorney's fees, and agree to file no new FOIA requests while the settlement is in effect. The settlement will be dissolved if Pebble does not file its application with the Army Corps within 30 months of settlement. This settlement does not guarantee any particular outcome to Pebble's permit application, but ensures that Pebble has a chance to make that application and have it considered in the regular course.

Timing: The settlement was publically announced on Friday, May 12, 2017. EPA's next step is to begin the administrative process to consider withdrawal of the proposed determination.

Contact: Justin Schwab, Deputy General Counsel, schwab.justin@epa.gov

2. **MURRAY ENERGY CORPORATION, ET AL V. EPA, NO.16-2432 – ORAL ARGUMENT HELD, COMPLIANCE PLAN FILED**. In this appeal of *Murray Energy Corp. et al. v. McCarthy*, (N.D. W. Va. 2016) in the Fourth Circuit, the Plaintiff alleged and the district court held that the Agency has failed to perform a non-discretionary duty under Section 321(a) of the Clean Air Act to evaluate potential loss or shifts of employment within an industry caused by regulations implementing the Act. DOJ and the Agency's position is that the district court's order goes far beyond what the statute requires of the Agency and runs the risk of requiring the Agency to identify facilities at risk of closure and thus compounding the market pressure to which those facilities are subject. Oral argument was held in the Fourth Circuit on May 9, 2017.

Timing: Comprehensive compliance plan filed with district court on May 15, 2017. Study of employment effects of Clean Air Act on coal sector due July 1, unless the Fourth Circuit provides relief before that date.

Contact: Justin Schwab, Deputy General Counsel, schwab.justin@epa.gov

3. **STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, ET AL. V. EPA, NO. 15-1363 (D.C. CIR.) – CONTINUED ABEYANCE REQUESTED**. On April 28, 2016, the *en banc* court issued an order holding the litigation challenging the Clean Power Plan in abeyance for 60 days and instructing the parties to file briefs by May 15, 2017, on the question whether the case should remain held in abeyance or whether the court should remand the rule to the Agency. On May

15, DOJ requested the court to hold the case in abeyance pending EPA's review of the rule. The rule's supporters have asked the court to remand the rule to EPA.

Timing: Parties filed briefs with D.C. Circuit on May 15, 2017 **Contact:** David Fotouhi, Deputy General Counsel, fotouhi.david@epa.gov

4. **CENTER FOR REGULATORY REASONABLENESS V. EPA, 849 F.3D 453 (D.C. CIR. 2017)—FILING DUE.** Petitioner sought review of two EPA letters discussing an earlier Eighth Circuit court decision addressing Clean Water Act regulations and policies as they relate to permit conditions for publicly owned treatment works. On February 28, 2017, the court denied review, holding that it lacked jurisdiction under Clean Water Act section 509(b) to review EPA's letters and statements on the issue because petitioner was out of time for review or because they did not announce an effluent limitation or other limitation on discharge. On April 11, 2017, the petitioners filed a petition for rehearing *en banc*, and the court has ordered EPA to respond to the petition.

Timing: DOJ intends to file a response to the petition for rehearing *en banc* by May 16, 2017 **Contact:** David Fotouhi, Deputy General Counsel, fotouhi.david@epa.gov

5. **DALTON TRUCKING, INC., ET AL. V. EPA, NO. 13-74019 (9TH CIR.)—ORAL ARGUMENT POSTPONED.** Petitioners filed a petition for review of EPA's grant of authorization under the Clean Air Act to the State of California for enforcement of its in-use non-road engine standards (e.g., construction equipment). Oral argument had been scheduled for May 18, 2017, but DOJ moved for and on May 10 received a postponement of that argument to allow EPA time to review and, if appropriate, modify or rescind the rule. The Ninth Circuit has asked for status reports every 90 days.

Timing: First status report will be due in mid-August **Contact:** Justin Schwab, Deputy General Counsel, schwab.justin@epa.gov

E. Release of High-Profile Grants

1. **\$56.5 MILLION FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT AND CLEANUP IN 171 COMMUNITIES:** EPA plans to announce \$56.5M in funding of new brownfields assessments and cleanup in 171 communities across the country. List of grantees will be developed internally this upcoming week. Grant funds may be used to address sites contaminated by, or potentially contaminated by, petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum):
- Assessment grants provide funding for a recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites. Recipients will each receive approximately \$200-600K in EPA cooperative agreement funding.
 - Cleanup grants provide funding for a recipient to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200K per site and up to three sites in a competition cycle.

Timing: Projected announcement day is May 23, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

2. **\$6.8 MILLION FOR DuSABLE PARK REMEDIATION PROJECT:** This Cooperative

Agreement (CA) provides funding in the amount of \$6.8M to the Chicago Park District (CPD) to complete property line to property line screening of the fill material for thorium at the DuSable Park site. CPD will remove and dispose of all thorium contaminated material (thorium source material, thorium product, thorium byproduct material/waste, soil, sediments, debris and fill materials with thorium or thorium byproduct contamination).

Timing: Mid May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

3. **\$5.7 MILLION FOR NEW YORK STATE DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION:** EPA plans to award an initial \$5,756,294 Performance Partnership Grant to NYSDEC for the operation of its continuing environmental programs while giving it greater flexibility to address its highest environmental priorities, improve environmental performance, achieve administrative savings and strengthen the partnership between NYSDEC and EPA. This agreement funds statewide programs to protect and improve water quality.
Timing: Mid June 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov
4. **\$2.7 MILLION FOR BROWFIELDS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM:** EPA plans to announce approximately \$2.7M through the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program. This announcement is planned to come on the heels of the larger brownfields grant and some of the 13 organizations selected to receive the grants will overlap geographically with the brownfield sites. Each organization will receive funds to operate environmental job training programs for local unemployed residents in hazardous and solid waste-impacted communities.
Timing: May 16, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov
5. **\$2.6 MILLION FOR OHIO EPA:** EPA plans to award The Ohio EPA \$2.64M in Federal Fiscal Year 2017 Clean Water Act Section 319(h) funding to support the Section 319(h) nonpoint pollution control program for the following priorities.
 - Implementation of Ohio EPA's Non-Point Source (NPS) Management Program including supporting active Total Maximum Daily Load reports and studies for watersheds
 - Overseeing and providing funding for the implementation of Best Management Practices conducted by 16 subgrantees
 - Providing technical assistance for 9-element watershed planning
 - Coordinating with U.S. EPA Region 5 staff for approvals of 9-element watershed plans
 - Engaging awareness and education of NPS activities amongst the general public, landowners, and other interested parties**Timing:** Mid June 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov
6. **\$2.5 MILLION FOR SOUTHEAST ROCKFORD SOURCE AREA 7 SUPERFUND SITE:** EPA plans to announce an award to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The work to be accomplished is associated with Area 7 Remedial Action (RA) that consist of contractor procurement, preconstruction activities, RA implementation, RA completion and the RA completion report. The overall objective of these tasks is to determine and document that the RA is functioning as designed. The site has been on the EPA national priorities list since 1989.

Timing: Mid May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

7. **\$2.43 MILLION FOR GREAT LAKES AREA OF CONCERN RESTORATION:** EPA plans to announce. This grant provides resources to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to continue its efforts to implement remedial action plans (RAPs) to restore twelve Areas of Concerns (AOCs), and coordinate implementation of the Lakewide Action and Management Plans (LAMPs) for the Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and the Lake St. Clair Comprehensive Management Plan. MDEQ will provide a Lake Coordinator for each of the four Great Lakes in Michigan to strategically identify and develop the priorities, partnerships, projects, and participation necessary to implement each LAMP and represent Michigan on various LAMP management committees, the Great Lakes Executive Committee, and the GLWQA subcommittee task teams. MDEQ will also focus efforts on removing specific Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) within these AOCs and initiate formal actions for delisting AOCs.

Timing: Mid May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

8. **\$1.56 MILLION FOR NEW YORK STATE HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT:** This agreement is for development and implementation of an authorized hazardous waste management program in New York State to control the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste; to minimize hazardous waste production; and to protect health and the environment from inactive hazardous waste facilities. Activities include permitting, corrective action, inspections, enforcement, computerized tracking, ensuring data quality, and pollution prevention outreach. This will help to preserve and restore the land by reducing waste generation and by managing hazardous wastes properly.

Timing: Late May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

9. **\$1.6 MILLION FOR THE ILLIOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY:** This Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) provides funds for the management and operation of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) continuing environmental programs while giving flexibility to address its highest priorities, improve performance, achieve savings and strengthen federal/state partnerships. This PPG funds statewide programs to the Bureau of Air, Bureau of Water and the Bureau of Land. The work includes outputs and outcomes associated with managing continuing environmental programs which include activities to protect and maintain air, water, land and data quality.

Timing: Late May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

10. **\$1.46 MILLION FOR THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL**

CONSERVATION: The Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) program assists rural Alaska communities in building drinking water and wastewater systems operations and maintenance capacity in order to protect human health and the environment. On-site operations and maintenance support and over the shoulder operator training establish technical capacity and promote compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Timing: Late May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

11. \$1.38 MILLION FOR THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL

PROTECTION: EPA plans to announce \$1,388,366 for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to support the State's efforts to protect human health and the environment by reducing air pollution and improving water quality through permitting, enforcement, and compliance efforts and watershed management; reducing hazardous waste and improving waste management practices; preserving underground drinking water sources; and ensuring protection of Public Water Supply Systems.

Timing: Week of May 15, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

12. \$1.18 MILLION FOR NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL

QUALITY: This action approves an increase of \$1,185,038 to the State of North Carolina to assist the State in adopting new drinking water regulations, develop and maintain a water system inventory and database, and perform compliance and enforcement of regulations. The project will help ensure that the State's water supplies are free from contamination which may pose adverse health effects.

Timing: Mid to late May 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

13. \$1.15 MILLION FOR SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL:

This action approves an increase of \$1,156,250 to the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control which continues support to prevent and reduce pollution, enforce environmental laws, reduce air and water pollution, preserve underground drinking water sources, ensure the safety of public drinking water supplies, manage waste and increase recycling more effectively from creation to disposal in order to protect the environment and health of the citizens throughout the State of South Carolina.

Timing: Week of May 15, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

14. \$1M FOR MARYLAND CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM: This cooperative agreement aids the recipient in providing enhanced monitoring to improve the assessment of sediment and nutrient load reductions support for the Chesapeake Bay Program and in providing Chesapeake Bay baywide and basinwide water quality and living resource monitoring data analysis and interpretation.

Timing: June 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

15. **\$343,883 FOR MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM:** EPA plans to announce \$343,883 for the Mobile Bay/Dauphin Island National Estuary Program in Alabama for its ongoing work of improving working waterfronts and preserving fishing communities. Mobile Bay National Estuary Program will conserve and improve working waterfronts and preserve fishing communities by using marine spatial planning techniques to engage further in dialogue through Working Waterfronts Coalition about how to efficiently balance conservation, restoration and multi-uses of MBNEP fishery resources. Will support activities geared toward achieving the objectives of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Timing: Sent May 15, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

16. **\$343,883 FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL ESTURARY PROGRAM:** EPA plans to announce \$343,883 for the State of North Carolina for its National Estuary Program. These funds will be used to identify, restore and protect the significant resources of the region and continue implementation of the unique management strategies.

Timing: May, 18, 2017 **Contact:** John Konkus, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Affairs, konkus.john@epa.gov

F. Congressional Testimony

1. **ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT TO TESTIFY AT SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON EPA BUDGET:** Administrator Pruitt will testify before the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee concerning the President's FY18 Budget.

Timing: June 27, 2017 **Contact:** Troy Lyons, Associate Administrator, OCIR, Lyons.Troy@epa.gov

G. Notable Press

1. **NEED TO KNOW NETWORK: PEBBLE MINE SETTLEMENT HUGE WIN FOR JOBS, TRUMP, AND PRUITT:** Administrator Pruitt reversed Obama-era veto on Alaska Pebble Mine project, a move that will prove to be a massive job creator. A 2013 HIS Global Insight study showed the project will create 15,000 Alaskan and national jobs during the project's operation. Further, the mine is expected to bring in an average of \$136 to \$180 million in annual taxes and royalties, putting it in the top tier of companies in the state.

Link: <http://ntknetwork.com/pebble-mine-settlement-huge-win-for-jobs-trump-and-pruitt/>

2. **THE DAILY CALLER: EPA CHIEF ORDERS FASTER SUPERFUND CLEANUP OF NATION'S MOST POLLUTED AREAS:** Administrator Pruitt is making it a priority to ensure contaminated Superfund sites get cleaned up by retaining the authority to approve cleanups that cost at least \$50M. This move will eliminate red tape and streamline and speedup the Superfund process. The previously delegated authority resulted in confusion among stakeholders and delayed revitalization efforts.

Link: <http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/11/epa-chief-orders-faster-superfund-cleanup-of-nations-most-polluted-areas/>

3. **AP: EPA SIGNS OFF ON NORTH DAKOTA REGULATION OF CO2 WELLS:**

Administrator Pruitt signed off on the proposal to make North Dakota the first state with the power to regulate underground wells used for long-term storage of waste carbon dioxide captured from industrial sources such as coal-fired power plants. The proposal languished under the Obama administration. A final decision will come after a 60-day public comment period. Giving the state this authority will empower state regulators, provide needed certainty, and advance CCS technologies, all while ensuring drinking water sources remain protected.

Link:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_NORTH_DAKOTA_CO2_REGULATION?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

H. Other/Awareness Only

1. **CLEAN AIR ACT EMPLOYMENT EVALUATION PLAN:** Per a WV District Court Order, EPA is required to submit a plan to conduct an evaluation of the coal industry and other entities affected by EPA regulations and an evaluation of potential loss or shifts of employment due to Clean Air Act regulations.

Timing: Due May 15, 2017 **Contact:** Brittany Bolen, Senior Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, bolen.brittany@epa.gov

2. **EPA INITIATION OF FORMAL TRIBAL CONSULTATION ON WOTUS**

REWRITE. On April 20, 2017, EPA initiated formal Tribal consultation on drafting a revised definition of “Waters of the United States.” Throughout this process EPA will reach out to each of the Tribes to solicit feedback on how best to draft a definition of “Waters of the United States” that is clear and easily implemented.

Timing: Initiated on April 20, 2017; Informal Webinar set for May 18, 2017, in-person meetings scheduled for May 3-4 in San Francisco. **Contact:** Sarah Greenwalt, Senior Advisor, Greenwalt.Sarah@epa.gov

3. **REGULATORY REFORM EXECUTIVE ORDER IMPLEMENTATION.** Per the President’s Executive Order 13777, “Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda,” EPA’s designated Regulatory Reform Task Force solicited public feedback on opportunities to repeal, modify or replace existing regulations. The public comment period closes May 15. So far, more than 55,000 public comments have been submitted. The Task Force has started to review public comments and is working on its progress report due to the Administrator by May 25.

Timing: Public comment period closes May 15; progress report due May 25, 2017 **Contact:** Brittany Bolen, Senior Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, bolen.brittany@epa.gov

4. **EPA TO WITHDRAW “ADEQUATE FACILITY” DETERMINATION FOR PUGET**

SOUND. In order to establish a no-discharge zone for an area, the EPA must determine that adequate pump out facilities exist in that region. On January 19—the eve of the President’s inauguration—EPA made a determination that adequate pump out facilities existed within the Puget Sound. After reviewing the basis of that decision, the current administration has determined that there are not an adequate number of facilities that can service the industry.

Timing: Draft correspondence relating decision – 1 week **Contact:** Sarah Greenwalt, Senior Advisor, Greenwalt.Sarah@epa.gov

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RULE:** The public comment period regarding the proposal to delay the effective date of the RMP final rule ends on May 19. A final rule would be issued before June 19, the current effective date of the RMP final rule.

Timing: Before June 19, 2017 **Contact:** Reggie Cheatham, Director, Office of Emergency Management, cheatham.reggie@epa.gov

Key Events for Upcoming 30 Days

Major Policy Speeches

- May 17 **Manhattan Institute Board Meeting, (New York City).** Administrator Pruitt will be the event headliner and will discuss how to protect the environment without hurting economic growth or transgressing the legal limits on the Agency’s powers.
- May 18 **Hoover Institution Meeting, (Washington, DC).** Stanford University’s Hoover Institution hosts a monthly speaker series, “Opening Arguments: Conversations on American Constitutionalism,” focused on how America governs itself. Administrator Pruitt will speak on “EPA Originalism”: A Conversation on Reforming the EPA.
- May 19 **Council for National Policy Meeting, (McLean, VA).** CNP is the premier conservative membership organization comprised of more than 400 of America’s most influential leaders. These educational events are held three times each year to build coalitions, strengthen the conservative movement, and thus seek to restore our nation to its founding principles. Administrator Pruitt will speak on challenges and opportunities at the EPA and how conservatives can help in achieving the administration’s policy objectives.
- May 25 **US Oil & Gas Association Board of Directors and Executive Committee Annual Meeting, (Washington, DC).** Meeting of industry CEOs and Presidents to discuss energy/environmental policy and to learn about the Trump Administration. The Administrator will have a general conversation on his goals for the EPA.
- May 31 **Kentucky Association of Manufacturers Conference, (Lexington, KY).** Administrator Pruitt will be the keynote speaker to kick off the energy and environment component of the Conference. He will speak on the current and future outlook on energy and environment in general.

Events

- May 16 **Western Growers Meeting, (Washington, DC).** Meeting to discuss key agricultural concerns under the jurisdiction of EPA.
- May 16 **American Institute of Architects Meeting, (Washington, DC).** Discussing EPA program and resources which are important to the business and practice of architecture.
- May 18 **Nation's Egg Producers Meeting, (Washington, DC).** Discussing environmental issues and regulations as they affect agriculture, including WOTUS and other timely topics.

To: Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 11/16/2017 8:12:19 PM
Subject: APPROVAL

I am going to give Newsweek this statement as well:

“Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.”

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2017 1:37 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here is our statement for Newsweek

Are you guys still able to get me these numbers? Thanks.

On Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 3:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We will get a number tomorrow for you.

On Nov 2, 2017, at 6:19 PM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

I am not trying to be a pest, but can someone please answer my inquiries?

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 5:42 PM, Alexander Nazaryan
<a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Hi, I don't think my question was especially difficult: given that Admin. Pruitt has explicitly said he would like to lighten regulatory burden, can you please quantify how he has done so?

I'd also asked about how many Regional hqs he has visited. No answer to that, either.

I'm sure you're all very busy, but he is a public official, running a public agency. I believe the people deserve answers.

Thank you.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 12:57 PM Alexander Nazaryan
<alexnazaryan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am continuing to work on my piece about Administrator Pruitt. If there is any chance of speaking with him by phone in the next month or so, we would of course welcome it.

In the meantime, I'd love to have some help in figuring out how many regulations Mr. Pruitt has either cancelled or delayed the implementation of since February. I'm seeing 30 as a number online, but that appears to be outdated.

Thank you.

Alexander

On Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 12:46 PM, Wilcox, Jahan
<wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example.

'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: alexnazaryan@gmail.com [<mailto:alexnazaryan@gmail.com>] **On Behalf Of** Alexander Nazaryan
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 12:34 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>
Subject: Pruitt

Hi Liz, working on a piece about the administrator's relationship to his

employees. I heard today that he hasn't visited a single EPA office outside DC. Can you please confirm?

Also, is he aware that the mood inside EPA is "morbid," as it has been described to me? Is he doing anything about that?

Thank you.

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

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Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer

Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Dennis, Brady
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 4:52:20 PM
Subject: definers

Hi there,

We might do something short on this Whitehouse/Harris letter asking EPA to cancel its contract with Definers. Just wanted to see if you all wanted to comment in any way?

Appreciate it.

The Washington Post

Brady Dennis

National Staff

Health, Science & Environment

Work: (202) 334-7745

Email: brady.dennis@washpost.com

Twitter: [@brady_dennis](https://twitter.com/brady_dennis)

Stories: <http://wapo.st/2sS5gfK>

To: Friedman, Lisa[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:41:40 PM
Subject: RE: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Tue 4/11/2017 11:11:39 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: W.H. still making calls looking for a deal on health care -- MULVANEY'S RISING STATUS -- 17 CEOs to the White House for a meeting with POTUS -- Congressman's DAD writes a letter to the Freedom Caucus

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.
04/11/2017 06:57 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) and JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

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WHCA PRESIDENT JEFF MASON announced on "Morning Joe" that **HASAN MINHAJ** is the headliner for the White House Correspondents Association dinner April 29.

BULLETIN FROM THE WHITE HOUSE -- ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF SESSIONS is heading to the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona today to announce "specific, new actions the Trump administration is taking to secure our borders and keep our people safe," an aide said.

THE TOUGH TALK STARTS -- AP at 6:32 a.m.: "LUCCA, Italy (AP) - Tillerson says Russia must choose between aligning with US and likeminded countries or with Assad, Iran and Hezbollah."

Good Tuesday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP has said he is done with health-care reform, and is moving onto an overhaul of the tax code. But **BEHIND THE SCENES**, top White House officials are still calling Republicans, looking for a deal on a health-care overhaul. The bill went down in flames a few weeks ago, but the thinking is that the White House can't just give up and walk away from their central campaign promise to repeal Obamacare. The effort has left Hill Republicans scratching their heads.

A sharp Republican makes this observation: The White House is not so good at internal congressional dynamics. OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, VP Mike Pence and HHS Secretary Tom Price -- the leaders of the health-care reform effort -- are all former lawmakers, but they all lost internal party elections when they were in Congress. They haven't proven terribly adept at counting votes.

-- BUT, BUT, BUT ... BUZZ IN THE WEST WING AND ON CAPITOL HILL: Mulvaney is on the rise in the Trump orbit. So when thinking about up and comers in the administration, think less about Gary Cohn, a New York City Democrat, and more about Mulvaney, a polished former congressman from the south who can keep up with Trump on the golf course (Mulvaney has a single-digit handicap). It's also a sign of how quickly Trump can shift his loyalties.

ANOTHER CEO MEETING AT 1600 PENNSYLVANIA -- Seventeen executives are heading to the White House today for a "Strategic and Policy Forum" meeting led by Stephen Schwarzman (the billionaire CEO of the Blackstone Group who Trump dined with at Mar-a-Lago Saturday night). The meeting is a follow up from a February session. They'll meet in breakout sessions with cabinet secretaries before a larger listening session. **TOPICS INCLUDE** ... infrastructure, education and more.

-- COMMERCE SECY WILBUR ROSS'S GROUP: Rich Lesser of the Boston Consulting Group; Doug McMillon of Walmart and Indra Nooyi of PepsiCo.

-- ED SECY BETSY DEVOS'S GROUP: Ginni Rometty of IBM; Jack Welch, formerly of GE and Toby Cosgrove of the Cleveland Clinic.

-- EPA ADMIN SCOTT PRUITT'S GROUP: Dan Yergin, the vice chairman of IHS Markit; Mary Barra of General Motors and Paul Atkins of Patomak Global Partners.

-- OMB DIRECTOR MICK MULVANEY'S GROUP: Kevin Warsh of the Hoover Institute; Mark Weinberger of EY; Jerry McNerney, former chairman of Boeing; and Larry Fink of BlackRock.

-- TRANSPORTATION SECY ELAINE CHAO'S GROUP: Elon Musk of SpaceX; Bayo Ogunlesi of Global Infrastructure Partners; Philip Howard, the founder of Common Good; Matt Rose, executive chairman of BNSF Railway.

EARLY-MORNING AP STORY by GW's own Josh Lederman in Lucca, Italy: "With fresh urgency but scant solutions, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and top foreign diplomats held an urgent meeting Tuesday to strategize on a way forward to end the protracted civil war in Syria. A meeting of the 'likeminded' countries was hastily arranged on the sidelines of a Group of 7 industrialized economies in Italy, days after the U.S. for the first time launched airstrikes against Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces. It came hours before Tillerson was to make a tense trip to Moscow to press Russia's leaders to finally abandon their support for Assad. ...

"At Tuesday's meeting in the walled Tuscan city of Lucca, the G-7 countries were joined by diplomats from Muslim-majority nations including Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. The inclusion of those countries is important because the U.S. strategy for Syria involves enlisting help from Mideast nations to ensure security and stability in Syria after the Islamic State group is vanquished." <http://apne.ws/2ouMJ6w>

SCOOP -- "Trump takes control of the GOP machine," by Gabe Debenedetti: "Now comes stage two of President Donald Trump's takeover of the Republican Party. With the Republican National Committee firmly in his control, the White House and Trump's political allies are now moving to lock down the state Republican parties, installing loyalists in top positions and laying the groundwork for the 2018 midterms and his 2020 reelection campaign in key swing states. Under the watchful eye of the president and the White House political office, Trump skeptics have been ousted from atop state committees. Lines of contact have been established to gauge the political temperature on the ground and monitor key upcoming races - beginning with the 2017 governor and attorney general races in Virginia.

"In addition to the political travel schedule of the president and Vice President Mike Pence -- who have since November visited a number of Republican and battleground states that they won, but none that they lost -- administration staffers are being dispatched beyond the Beltway: Kellyanne Conway, a Trump counselor in the White House and his campaign manager, is set to speak to state parties in New Hampshire and North Carolina in the coming weeks." <http://politi.co/2p2ikP3>

SPECIAL ELECTION IS HAPPENING TODAY -- "Republicans undertake unexpected rescue mission in deep red Kansas," by WaPo's Dave Weigel in Wichita: Democratic candidate James "Thompson was not supposed to win -- or even come close -- in this largely rural 4th District, which picked Donald Trump for president by 27 points. Rep. Mike Pompeo (R) vacated the seat to lead the CIA, and Republicans expected to hold it easily.

"But in the final days before Tuesday's special election, Republicans reacted to weak polling and turnout data by rushing resources to southern Kansas. A GOP super PAC rolled out robo-calls over the weekend from Vice President Pence, and on Monday from President Trump, in support of candidate Ron Estes. 'Ron Estes needs your vote and needs it badly,' Trump said on the call. 'Ron is going to be helping us, big league.'" <http://wapo.st/2pog4wy>

-- THE JMART DEADPAN from Wichita: "Congressional Republicans knew next year's election could prove difficult, as the first midterm campaigns for the party controlling the White House often are. But not until a few days ago would they have believed that their immediate challenge would be hanging onto a House seat they have controlled for over two decades, in a district that President Trump carried by 27 points and that just happens to be home to that most nefarious of liberal boogeyman: Koch Industries." <http://nyti.ms/2p0wTBf>

SIREN -- "Republicans avoid town halls after health care votes," by USA Today's Heidi Przbyla: "Reps. Leonard Lance of New Jersey and Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania appear to be the only swing-district Republicans who voted for their party's bill to replace Obamacare who will directly face constituents over the April recess, according to a USA Today analysis of scheduled town halls compiled by Townhallproject.com. ... The lack of town hall meetings in key swing districts during a spring break that lasts until April 23 underscores the party's precarious political position on health care and peaking civic activism by progressives. ...

"The migration away from public forums has been going on for months, despite complaints from constituents and local media. There have been roughly 30 recent newspaper editorials slamming lawmakers for avoiding town halls and calling on members to face their voters, not only in bluer portions of the country like New York but also in critical battlegrounds like Pennsylvania's 6th and 7th districts, represented by Reps. Pat Meehan and Costello." <http://usat.ly/2pobM8n>

-- **It's never a good sign** when lawmakers don't want to interact with their constituents when they are back home. Republicans need a clear message on what they are doing on health care. The last-minute legislative gambit to pass a bill focused on high risk insurance pools in the House Rules Committee doesn't appear to have done the job.

***** "A lack of economic growth and opportunity has led to deep and understandable frustration among so many Americans," writes JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon. Learn more about why we need "coherent, consistent, comprehensive and coordinated policies that help fix these problems" in his Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2oaMj4Q> *****

MICHAEL CROWLEY and **JOSH DAWSEY** on Syria: **"Trump vexed by Assad's motivation for chemical weapons attack":** "In White House meetings, evening calls with friends and even throughout the weekend at Mar-a-Lago, President Donald Trump asked a repeated question: Why did Syria's president use nerve gas? Trump puzzled over the mystery -- even as he ordered 59 Tomahawk missiles careening into a Syrian airfield last Thursday night. ... That Trump and his team couldn't initially decide what may have motivated the strike complicated the decision-making on how to move forward, one administration official said, but 'not to the point of stopping us from doing anything.' Still, the uncertainty and its effect on Trump provides a window into how the inexperienced commander in chief copes with major decisions. Aides and friends say the lack of clarity seemed to worry Trump, who is impatient and has sometimes expressed distrust of the intelligence community, while he faced his first military test. 'No one really knew exactly why,' a senior administration official said Saturday. 'And Trump wanted to know why.'" <http://politi.co/2poh2ce>

-- **DAVID ECKELS WADE** in The Atlantic: **"Lessons From the 'Red Line' Crisis:** I was chief of staff at the State Department the last time a president considered punishing Assad for using chemical weapons. The complexities we faced then are worth

considering as Trump contemplates what's next in Syria." [http://theatlantic.com/2016/09/20/2016-09-20/](http://theatlantic.com/2016/09/20/2016-09-20/2016-09-20/)

FILLING THE ADMINISTRATION -- "Why the Trump administration has so many vacancies," by Nancy Cook, Josh Dawsey and Andrew Restuccia: "The process is bogged down as a result of micromanaging by the president and senior staff, turf wars between the West Wing and Cabinet secretaries and a largely inexperienced and overworked staff, say more than a dozen sources including administration insiders, lobbyists, lawyers and Republican strategists. Trump personally oversees the hiring process for agency staff by insisting on combing through a binder full of names each week and likes to sign off on each one ... Also weighing in on the names -- and not always agreeing on final picks -- are leaders of sometimes warring factions, including chief of staff Reince Priebus, senior strategist Steve Bannon, Cabinet secretaries and, sometimes, the White House's top lawyer, Don McGahn.

"The only uniformity is that potential hires must show fealty to the president. ... The head of the Office of Presidential Personnel, Johnny DeStefano, did not start until Inauguration Day, and some of the office's problems are attributed to his leadership, say Trump allies, Republican strategists and lawyers familiar with the hiring process. The administration picked DeStefano, who had run the data operation of the Republican National Committee and worked for former House Speaker John Boehner but had no recruiting experience. DeStefano, in turn, stacked the office with campaign veterans who demonstrated loyalty to the president but had little government experience."

<http://politi.co/2o2HUhD>

-- **"More delays in ambassador nominations, trainings,"** by CNN's Theodore Schleifer: "The State Department has delayed its planned training sessions for new ambassadors as an appointment bottleneck frustrates donors and allies of President Donald Trump who expect plum postings overseas. The sessions, meant to train new prospective diplomats who are successfully vetted by the White House, were originally slated to begin this month, but have since been rescheduled to May, according to a person briefed on the process. Friends of Trump have been lobbying him at places like Mar-a-Lago in Florida and at private fundraisers for positions in Western Europe or the Caribbean. But the training delay reflects the slow pace with which Trump is filling the ambassadorial positions, which typically are rewards to key supporters."

<http://cnn.it/2ouNIZL>

DEAR FREEDOM CAUCUS, FROM A CONGRESSMAN'S DAD -- REP. TREY HOLLINGSWORTH (R-Ind.) was elected to Congress in November after his father gave \$1.4 million to a super PAC boosting his campaign. Now, Joe Hollingsworth Jr. -- the 33-year-old congressman's father -- has penned a letter to members of the House Freedom Caucus admonishing them for their legislative tactics. "First, let me disclose that I am not a resident or voter in your district. However, I am a conservative donor that has funded over a million in political campaigns for conservative causes. I was contacted today by a group that wanted to raise money to fund opponents against the House Freedom Caucus members. ... I have chosen not to participate in that cause but instead write you directly ... [W]hat was done by the House Freedom Caucus was almost

suicidal to the Republican Party, to your group and possibly individually."

-- **Robert Burgess**, the congressman's spokesman, said, "Joe Hollingsworth exercised his right as a citizen to express his opinion to elected representatives, but he does not speak for Rep. Trey Hollingsworth who remains committed to working with fellow Republicans towards the full repeal of Obamacare."

NOT SO FAST -- "Trump Jr nixes 2018 NY bid, but could run for office someday," by AP's Jonathan Lemire: "Donald Trump Jr., rumored to be eyeing a move to follow his father's footsteps into politics, will not be a candidate for governor of New York next year but is not ruling out a possible run for office in the future. The younger Trump, in an interview Monday with The Associated Press, categorically denied any speculation that he might challenge incumbent Gov. Andrew Cuomo. 'I am not running in 2018,' Trump said in his first public comments about a possible candidacy next year. But he acknowledged having been bitten by the politics bug and said that he could consider a run down the road. 'Maybe someday,' Trump said. 'It's not something I'm doing now. But you never know, it's fascinating stuff.'" <http://apne.ws/2nXYLBq>

THE JUICE ...

-- **THREE DEM VETS LAUNCH CAMPAIGNS:** Isaac Doovere scooped that House Democrats were recruiting veterans to run for office. Today three will announce their campaigns: Jason Crow, a decorated Army Ranger, is running against Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colo.); Chrissy Houlahan, an Air Force officer, is running against Rep. Ryan Costello (R-Pa.); and Josh Butner, a Lt. Commander of the U.S. Navy Seals, is announcing against embattled Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.).

-- **HOT JOB: "Manager - Brand Public Relations, United Airlines":** "The pace is fast, our standards are high and the opportunities are boundless. If joining us in building a forward-thinking, path-blazing, world class communications team sounds intriguing - let's talk. Being part of big, transformative moments like this are rare - so, if you have the courage, the creativity, the conviction, the agility, the leadership and most importantly the passion to help United reclaim its reputation as one of the world's great and resilient companies we hope you'll consider embarking on this journey with us." <http://politi.co/2om3Y7L> (h/t Tom Manatos)

-- **HARRY REID** is joining UNLV's law school as its first distinguished fellow in law and policy. <http://bit.ly/2oTt0P2>

--**ROBBY MOOK** is back to sending campaign emails! He emailed yesterday on behalf of Archie Parnell, formerly a senior adviser at Goldman Sachs, running for the 5th district in South Carolina, which was Mick Mulvaney's district: "My start in politics was as grassroots as you can get: campaigning for Democrats at the town dump. ... Archie Parnell is running for the seat that John Spratt held when I first started working on Congressional campaigns, a seat that Democrats had held for over a century."

TRUMP'S TUESDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is attending the meeting of CEOs, then will meet with Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn. In the evening, he's dining with military leaders.

Playbook Reads

PULITZER WINNERS -- THE LOCAL ANGLE -- David Fahrenthold of the Washington Post for his "persistent reporting that created a model for transparent journalism in political campaign coverage while casting doubt on Donald Trump's assertions of generosity toward charities." <http://bit.ly/2p0LwV5> ... ***A list of all the winners*** <http://bit.ly/2posG6W>

PIC DU JOUR -- @agearan: "The wall outside the State Dept briefing room where portraits of former spokespeople used to hang." <http://bit.ly/2nzT3uo>

HOW ABOUT THAT -- "Remember Mitt Romney's 'binders full of women?' They're real. And we got them," by the Boston Globe's Jim O'Sullivan. <http://bit.ly/2ouVVHV>

THE LATEST ON THE BAN -- "Full bench of 4th Circuit to hear Trump travel ban case in May," by Josh Gerstein: "The full bench of a federal appeals court in Virginia will consider the legality of President Donald Trump's revised travel ban executive order at an argument session next month, the court announced Monday. The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals said it will conduct an en banc hearing May 8 in Richmond on the federal government's appeal of a Maryland-based judge's ruling blocking Trump's ban on issuance of visas to citizens of six majority-Muslim countries. Normally, appeals go to a three-judge panel for review. However, the en banc session will involve 15 judges hearing the case. The 4th Circuit's active bench has nine Democratic appointees, five Republican appointees and one judge who was nominated to the court by both a Democratic president and a Republican one." <http://politi.co/2oIRnlc>

TRUMP INC. -- "Leaked Email: President Trump's Modeling Agency Is Shutting Down," by Mother Jones' James West: "One of President Donald Trump's favorite businesses ... his embattled New York modeling firm, Trump Model Management, has officially told its business associates around the world to prepare for its closure, according to an email obtained by Mother Jones. Over the weekend, Corinne Nicolas, president of Trump Models, informed industry colleagues of the pending closure of the 18-year-old agency, in which Trump owns an 85 percent stake (according to his most recent financial disclosure). 'The Trump Organization is choosing to exit the modeling industry,' Nicolas wrote in the email. 'On the heels of the recent sale of the Miss Universe Organization, the company is choosing to focus on their core businesses in

the real estate, golf and hospitality space." <http://bit.ly/2p29L2x>

THE LUV GOV -- "Robert Bentley's years of scandal end in 6 historic days for Alabama," by the Birmingham News' Mike Cason: <http://bit.ly/2p0y6bB>

***** "It is now more important than ever for the business community and government to come together and collaborate to find meaningful solutions and develop thoughtful policies that create economic growth and opportunity for all." Learn more in JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon's Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2oKtc2G> *****

SNEAK PEAK -- RICK PERLSTEIN in the NYT Magazine, **"I Thought I Understood the American Right. Trump Proved Me Wrong":** "The professional guardians of America's past, in short, had made a mistake. We advanced a narrative of the American right that was far too constricted to anticipate the rise of a man like Trump. Historians, of course, are not called upon to be seers. Our professional canons warn us against presentism - we are supposed to weigh the evidence of the past on its own terms - but at the same time, the questions we ask are conditioned by the present. That is, ultimately, what we are called upon to explain. Which poses a question: If Donald Trump is the latest chapter of conservatism's story, might historians have been telling that story wrong?" <http://nyti.ms/2olZLBf>

OFF MESSAGE PODCAST: Where to next in Syria? In the latest episode of Off Message, Isaac Dove sits down with former American diplomat and Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, who breaks down every angle of the U.S position in Syria following last week's bombing. "It certainly changes our posture in the sense that we've now said, 'We will attack you if you use chemical weapons.'" <http://politi.co/2nA61YO> ... **Listen and subscribe** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- "Nextdoor eyes 2018, aims for neighbor-to-neighbor approach in politics," by Playbook California co-author Carla Marinucci in San Jose: "The community social media site has become a tool for elected officials, civic activists, and even political candidates aiming to reach voters, and neighbors, in San Jose's 430 distinct neighborhoods, which make up one of the country's largest and most diverse cities." <http://politi.co/2nA0kuc>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Breitbart editors tell staffers to stop writing stories critical of Jared Kushner, sources say," by Business Insider's Oliver Darcy: "Employees at Breitbart News have been asked by senior editors to refrain from writing stories critical of Jared Kushner, two people familiar with the matter told Business Insider. ... Kushner had become a target of Breitbart News amid reports that he was feuding with Stephen Bannon, the news website's former executive chairman who is now the White House chief strategist." <http://read.bi/2ouCeQw>

-- WAPO STYLE PROFILE -- "Brian Stelter has been training for this moment his entire life," by Ellen McCarthy in New York. <http://wapo.st/2poFbPZ>

Playbookers

SPOTTED at the White House seder last night: VA Secretary David Shulkin, Jeremy Katz, deputy director of the National Economic Council, and other staff who couldn't get home to spend the holiday with their families

SPOTTED: Kellyanne Conway having a long and late lunch outdoors at BLT Steak Monday. A photographer on the sidewalk snapped photos of her while she was dining and was asked to leave.

ENGAGED - Adrienne Watson, deputy comms director for the DNC and a Hillary campaign alum, just got engaged to **Will Jennings**. They met in D.C., worked together on the campaign, and he proposed in Charleston. ***Instapic** with the caption "This ring goes with everything! #strongertogether"* <http://bit.ly/2nzSEba>

TRANSITIONS -- Alexis Weiss has moved to New York to lead media relations for Edelman's public affairs practice as a vice president. She previously was a vice president on the media services and strategies team in Edelman's D.C. office. ... **Alyssa Canobbio Hackbarth** is joining the American Legislative Exchange Council as their manager of public affairs and digital strategy. Her last day as war room director at the Washington Free Beacon is Thursday ... **Chris Pack** is headed to American Crossroads as communications director. He is currently deputy communications director at the NRCC. ...

... **Walter Garcia** just started working as the press secretary for California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. He was the national press secretary for the Keith Ellison for DNC Chair campaign, and the western regional communications director at the DNC ... **Danielle Doheny** started at the International Myeloma Foundation last month as their new director of public policy and advocacy. She was previously senior LA for Rep. Richard Nugent (R-Fla.) ... **Rykia Dorsey**, a press assistant at Third Way, has been named press secretary for Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.). (h/t Matt Bennett)

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Tori Weems, manager of standards and technology at the RIAA, and **Michael Weems**, vice president for government engagement at the American Lighting Association, have welcomed Eisele Weems, 6 lbs., 3 oz, born two weeks ago. ***Pic*** <http://politi.co/2o2M358>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Raelyn Johnson, senior producer at MSNBC and an Al Jazeera, CNN and ABC alum -- she is celebrating with "dinner with my best friend Miguel at dell'anima. It's our tradition. We sit at the chef's table which is adorned with

Wu-Tang memorabilia and I instantly remember how old I was when their first album came out. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing." Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2p0zqv>

BIRTHDAYS: Ethel Kennedy is 89 ... HFA alum Alex Phillips, now director of surrogates and media affairs for Leader Schumer ... Ed Skyler, former NYC Deputy Mayor for Operations now Citi's EVP for global public affairs ... Erika Masonhall, comms manager for news partnerships at Facebook and an NBC News alum ... Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Tex.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is 62 ... J.D. Harrison, senior editor of strategic comms for the U.S. Chamber ... former Rep. Mark Kennedy (R-Minn.), president of the University of North Dakota, is 6-0 ... David Wofford, VP at Meridian Group International ... Sydney Rubin, deputy director at WomenStrong International ... Michele Ballantyne, SVP for federal gov't relations at Recording Industry Association of America ... Marcia Hale, president of Building America's Future Education Fund and a Clinton WH alum ... Missi Tessier, managing principal at the Podesta Group (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Laura Braden Quigley, VP of comms at the California Medical Association ... Abigail Sigler ... Christian Science Monitor justice reporter Henry Gass ... Politico's Hillary Alvaré and Boris Alban Saka ... Manuel Ortiz, founder of VantageKnight ... Donna Borak, senior economics writer at CNN ... Kate Warren, senior director and editor for careers and recruiting at Devex ...

... **Chris Gates**, Broncos fan, senior advisor at the Council on Foundations and former president of the Sunlight Foundation ... Benjamin Bryant, deputy press secretary for Sen. Jack Reed ... Sebastian Silva, Sen. Kaine's press assistant (h/t Sarah Peck) ... Joshua Lapidus, a Democratic consultant who has worked in Maryland/Montana, is 27 (h/t Kyle Cheney) ... Edelman's Jon Berrier is 35, celebrating with dinner at Le Diplomate (h/t Blain Rethmeier) ... Paul Arden, senior associate at SKDKnickerbocker and a Dianne Feinstein alum, is 3-0 ... Kevin O'Neill, senior director of marketing at the Washington Speakers Bureau ... Christopher Malagisi, editor in chief of the Conservative Book Club ... Don Graves ... Marc Ross, co-founder of Caracal Strategies ... Kargo's Alex Douglas ... Nina Verghese ... Linda Lipsen, CEO at AAJ, the American Association for Justice (h/t Randy White) ... Julie Tarallo, Sen. McCain's comms director ... 3 Bush 43 alums: Sarah Beth Lowe ... Nancy Yacoub ... Jacob Peterson, director of Latino affairs for Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner, is 32 ... Kim Aagaard, Podesta Group alum now a grad student at Sciences Po ... Julie Westfall, deputy politics editor at L.A. Times ... Jim Parenti ... Jamie Sterling ... Adam Kramer ... Jake Peterson is 32 ... Elliott Suthers ... Bob Fois is 55 ... William Hamby ... Gil Gross ... DOT alum Beth Osborne ... Bret Funk ... Sharon Haselhoff ... Sara Norris ... Teresa Thomas-Boyd ... Danny Vega (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman is 76 ... Joss Stone is 3-0 (h/ts AP)

***** Optimistic about the future of America's economy, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon believes we need effective public policy and for business to play a role in developing solutions that spur economic growth and benefit every American. Learn more in his Annual Letter to Shareholders: <http://politi.co/2nTquUG> *****

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To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/8/2017 11:15:02 PM
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Let's talk tomorrow.

I sense you'd really like to get Bulletin but they don't alert stories, tv clips, radio hits and tweets in live time like the interns do.

For example, this weekend everyone was asking me for the Pruitt coverage from the Sunday shows.

Maybe there is a way to do both and make everyone happy, but in terms of actual press people (including everyone in your shop) we need stuff in live time so we can shape it before sometime goes viral, etc.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 7:06 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

We had around 500 receiving the clips when we used Bulletin Intelligence. It had crept up over time. As employees realized that their bosses were reading, we would get requests to added to the distribution list. Bulletin Intelligence did not place a limit on how many employees could receive. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 6:37 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Not that I'm aware of. Do you have any idea how many people we are talking about. I have about 130 EPA people on my press list.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 5:37 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks, Jahan. It looks competitive with other vendors I've seen. Do you know if there would be any limits on the number of recipients within EPA? - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 5:28 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definercorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Mon 12/11/2017 6:37:35 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates: OBAMA and BIDEN record robocalls for DOUG JONES -- Botched terror attack in NYC injures four -- ROY MOORE down 10 in Fox News poll -- SPOTTED at the Army-Navy game

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

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Good Monday afternoon. THE BOMB IN NYC THIS MORNING -- "New York Explosion Empties Port Authority; Suspect Is in Custody," by NYT's William Rashbaum, Jonah Bromwich and Brian Rosenthal: "A peaceful beginning to the workweek was shattered Monday after an explosion rattled through one of the busiest transit hubs in New York City, causing the authorities to evacuate hundreds of commuters and throwing the morning into chaos. The Police Department said that one person was in custody after the blast echoed through the passageway connecting the Times Square and Port Authority subway stations shortly before 7:30 a.m.

"The suspect, identified by the police as Akayed Ullah, 27, an immigrant from Bangladesh who lived in Brooklyn, was in serious condition at Bellevue Hospital Center. The Fire Department said four injuries had been reported. A senior city official who declined to be identified because of the continuing investigation said that Mr. Ullah had been wearing an explosive device and after the blast the police had to strip him to remove it.

"The subway stations were evacuated, and Port Authority Bus Terminal was also shut down. Mr. Ullah was alone, the police said, and the device was reported to have gone off prematurely. The explosion was recorded on surveillance video, the city official said. ... In a news conference, Mayor Bill de Blasio called the blast an attempted terrorist attack and said no other devices had been found." <http://nyti.ms/2jyrKPZ>

BIG GUNS OUT FOR DOUG JONES -- "Obama tells Alabama voters to reject Roy Moore," by CNN's Jeff Zeleny: "Former President Barack Obama is adding his voice to the Alabama Senate race, imploring voters to go to the polls Tuesday to reject the candidacy of Roy Moore as part of an aggressive effort by Democrats to try and counter President Donald Trump's full-throated endorsement of the controversial Republican candidate.

"This one's serious,' Obama says in the call. 'You can't sit it out.' Two Democratic officials familiar with the Alabama race tell CNN that Obama recorded the phone

message in recent days, at the very time Trump stepped up his own involvement in the campaign with a recorded message. Obama does not mention Moore by name."

<http://cnn.it/2knG8XT>

-- **"Biden records robo-call for Jones,"** by Gabe Debenedetti: "Joe Biden is swooping back into the Alabama special Senate election on Monday with a robo-call on behalf of Democrat Doug Jones, a Democrat close to Biden told POLITICO. In addition to recording the call that will hit Alabamian's phones one day before they vote, the former vice president is planning to tap his large email list on behalf of the former U.S. Attorney running against Roy Moore. The call will make no mention of Moore, the person familiar with the plan said." <http://politi.co/2klwWDf>

MOORE PROBLEMS -- "Fox News Poll: Enthused Democrats give Jones lead over Moore in Alabama," by Fox News' Dana Blanton: "Jones receives 50 percent to Moore's 40 percent, with 1-in-10 undecided (8 percent) or supporting another candidate (2 percent) -- which could make a difference Tuesday. That's even truer with such an unconventional election with unconventional candidates." <http://fxn.ws/2iQXmwv>

-- **Every other poll tracked** by Real Clear Politics in the month of December has shown Moore with a lead, including one today from Emerson College. The Fox News' poll is the only live-caller poll. **The RCP tracker** <http://bit.ly/2iTq8MO>

FIRST STREET READ -- "Nebraska RNC official resigns to protest support of Moore," by Alex Isenstadt: "Nebraska Republican National Committeewoman Joyce Simmons resigned Monday in protest of the committee's financial support for Roy Moore. 'I strongly disagree with the recent RNC financial support directed to the Alabama Republican Party for use in the Roy Moore race. There is much I could say about this situation, but I will defer to this weekend's comments by Senator Shelby,' she wrote in an email to fellow party officials. 'I will miss so many of you that I knew well; and wish I could have continued my service to the national Republican Party that I used to know well.'" <http://politi.co/2iPUgZt>

TAKE TWO -- "After Weinstein, Trump assault accusers 'try again'," by Louis Nelson: "A woman who last year accused President Donald Trump of ogling her and her fellow Miss USA contestants in their private dressing room said Monday that the recent tidal wave of sexual assault allegations and repercussions against powerful men has opened a window for her and other women who have accused Trump of sexual misconduct to 'try round two' and seek accountability from the president.

"You know, it was heartbreaking last year, when we all -- you know, we're private citizens and for us to put ourselves out there to try to show America who this man is and especially how he views women and for them to say, 'meh, we don't care,' it hurt,' Samantha Holvey told NBC's 'Megyn Kelly Today.' 'And so, you know, now, it's just like, all right, let's try round two. The environment's different. Let's try again.'

"Holvey was joined Monday by Jessica Leeds, who claims Trump groped her in the

first class cabin of a commercial flight in the 1980s, and Rachel Crooks, who said the president kissed her unwantedly in 2005. Over the course of almost the entire hour of Kelly's show, the three women detailed their allegations against Trump, all of which the president has repeatedly and emphatically denied." <http://politi.co/2iPaUsm>

JUST POSTED -- "'Journalism for rent': Inside the secretive firm behind the Trump dossier," by WaPo's Jack Gillum and Shawn Boburg: "Fusion GPS bills itself as a corporate research firm, but in many ways it operates with the secrecy of a spy agency. ... [H]undreds of internal company documents obtained by The Washington Post reveal how Fusion, a firm led by former journalists, has used investigative reporting techniques and media connections to advance the interests of an eclectic range of clients on Wall Street, in Silicon Valley and in the nation's capital. ... In the years before it produced the dossier, records show, Fusion worked to blunt aggressive reporting on the medical-device company Theranos ... It was also hired to ward off scrutiny of the nutritional supplement company Herbalife ...

"In another case, the firm sought to expose what it called 'slimy dealings' by a competitor of a San Francisco museum proposed by filmmaker and 'Star Wars' director George Lucas. ... Fusion's other past research targets, documents show, included tech giants Google and Amazon; 2012 presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Barack Obama; and Republican Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Bob Corker of Tennessee." <http://wapo.st/2Abzv1A>

FLYNN UPDATE -- "Former Flynn associate says phone records contradict whistleblower's account," by Kyle Cheney: "A former business associate of Michael Flynn told lawmakers that phone records contradict an anonymous whistleblower's allegation that the ex-national security adviser sent an Inauguration Day text declaring a controversial Middle East nuclear energy deal 'good to go,' according to a letter released Monday. ...

"[I]n a letter to [Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.)] dated Friday, Thomas Cochran, a top ACU official, said the whistleblower's account was inaccurate, attaching AT&T phone records that he said show Copson did not get a text from Flynn that day. 'The only text message Mr. Copson received on Inauguration Day came at 1:49 p.m.,' Cochran said. He said that text was from a friend who attended the same function where the whistleblower claimed to witness Copson's boasting." <http://politi.co/2kX7M1H>

ON THE PRESIDENT'S MIND -- @realDonaldTrump at 9:17 a.m.: "Another false story, this time in the Failing @nytimes, that I watch 4-8 hours of television a day - Wrong! Also, I seldom, if ever, watch CNN or MSNBC, both of which I consider Fake News. I never watch Don Lemon, who I once called the 'dumbest man on television!' Bad Reporting."

SPOTTED this weekend at the **ARMY-NAVY GAME**: Mike Pompeo, HR McMaster, Dina Powell and Dave McCormick, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Army Secretary Mark Esper, Jeremy Bash, Michael Allen, Jared Cohen, and David Urban ... Attorney General

Jeff Sessions at the Saturday matinee of "The Christmas Carol" at Ford's Theatre.

RAHM'S WORLD -- "Emanuel tries to dig out, look ahead to third term bid," by the Chicago Tribune's Bill Ruthhart: "Mayor Rahm Emanuel is in the back half of a second term filled with controversies and challenges that would have left many politically weakened if not finished for good, but he's as cocksure as ever about his future. Long a fan of the who's-up-and-who's-down handicapping of an election cycle, Emanuel left little doubt in a recent interview he's been keeping track of who might run against him in February 2019.

"We know six people said, 'No,'" he said bluntly. 'Everything else is conjecture and thumb-sucking.' Emanuel doesn't name names. This isn't 1992, and he's no longer a Bill Clinton political operative shouting the names of political enemies, plunging a steak knife into a restaurant table and exclaiming 'dead!' after each one. A quarter century later, he's sipping from a glass of iced tea in his City Hall office, and while that doesn't have the same dramatic effect, his point is clear: With each well-known politician who opts not to run, his prospects for a third term strengthen." <http://trib.in/2kkLOSs>

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** UAE airlines bought \$42 billion in US-made commercial aircraft at the 2017 Dubai Airshow. That's economic growth and jobs for Americans. The UAE-US commercial aviation relationship is a win-win deal. <http://politi.co/2kaKWj8> *****

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Rohingya methodically raped by Myanmar's armed forces," by the AP's Kristen Gelineau in Ukhia, Bangladesh: "The rape of Rohingya women by Myanmar's security forces has been sweeping and methodical, the Associated Press found in interviews with 29 women and girls who fled to neighboring Bangladesh. These sexual assault survivors from several refugee camps were interviewed separately and extensively. They ranged in age from 13 to 35, came from a wide swath of villages in Myanmar's Rakhine state and described assaults between October 2016 and mid-September.

"Foreign journalists are banned from the Rohingya region of Rakhine, making it nearly impossible to independently verify each woman's report. Yet there was a sickening sameness to their stories, with distinct patterns in their accounts, their assailants' uniforms and the details of the rapes themselves." <http://bit.ly/2kZ7Zlb>

HAPPENING TONIGHT -- Susan Glasser, POLITICO's Chief International Affairs Correspondent and host of the Global POLITICO podcast, will moderate a debate focused on the changing role of America's military, convened by the Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy program and the Charles Koch Institute. General John Allen and Mara Karlin will engage in a thoughtful and lively discussion with Michael Desch and Eugene Gholz from the University of Notre Dame to debate what the military of the future needs to look like to successfully confront the evolving global threats of the 21st century. Doors open 6:30 p.m. PT tonight at Greenspun Hall Auditorium at UNLV. Follow along on Twitter via #AmericaInTheWorld. **Livestream** <http://politi.co/2111yOj> ...

Register <http://brook.gs/2kYIH6w>

CLICKER -- A holiday card POTUS sent out that a Playbooker passed along to us:
<http://politi.co/2kZIkJ0>

AFTERNOON READ -- JULIA IOFFE's ATLANTIC cover story (her first for the magazine) -- **"The Myth of Vladimir Putin the Puppet Master"**: "In the same way that Russians overestimate America, seeing it as an all-powerful orchestrator of global political developments, Americans project their own fears onto Russia, a country that is a paradox of deftness, might, and profound weakness-unshakably steady, yet somehow always teetering on the verge of collapse. Like America, it is hostage to its peculiar history, tormented by its ghosts.

"None of these factors obviates the dangers Russia poses; rather, each gives them shape. Both Putin and his country are aging, declining -- but the insecurities of decline present their own risks to America. The United States intelligence community is unanimous in its assessment not only that Russians interfered in the U.S. election but that, in the words of former FBI Director James Comey, 'they will be back.' It is a stunning escalation of hostilities for a troubled country whose elites still have only a tenuous grasp of American politics. And it is classically Putin, and classically Russian: using daring aggression to mask weakness, to avenge deep resentments, and, at all costs, to survive.

"I'd come to Russia to try to answer two key questions. The more immediate is how the Kremlin, despite its limitations, pulled off one of the greatest acts of political sabotage in modern history, turning American democracy against itself. And the more important -- for Americans, anyway -- is what might still be in store, and how far an emboldened Vladimir Putin is prepared to go in order to get what he wants."

<http://theatlantic.com/2017/12/14/putin-the-puppet-master-julia-ioffe/> ... **The cover** <http://politi.co/2iTI4Is>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Cuomo's team derides report of FBI probe into hiring practices -- Boston media roiled by misconduct allegations
<http://politi.co/2iPkJq6>

ATTENTION JOURNALISM STUDENTS -- POLITICO is accepting applications for its fifth session of the POLITICO Journalism Institute (PJI), an educational initiative focused on newsroom diversity. The intensive program, which is designed for college students, will be held May 29 to June 9, 2018. It features hands-on training for up to 12 recent grads and university students interested in covering government and politics. Students also will have an opportunity to have their work published by POLITICO. All expenses are paid for the program, reflecting POLITICO's ongoing support of journalism education, newsroom diversity and recruitment of top-notch talent. Admissions are made on a rolling basis, but no later than Jan. 15, 2018. <http://politi.co/2B3WVcw>

MISCONDUCT UPDATE -- "Mario Batali Steps Away From Restaurant Empire Following Sexual Misconduct Allegations," by Eater's Irene Plagianos and Kitty

Greenwald <http://bit.ly/2iU5vjI>

MEDIAWATCH -- @bterris: "After all that... Armstrong [Williams] called me today to say that he will NOT be the next owner of the City Paper. 'I'm going to stay in the space I'm welcome: television stations.'" ***Terris' profile of Armstrong Williams from last week*** <http://wapo.st/2iUTdaB>

-- **Morgan Murtaugh** is now a full-time news anchor for One America News Network. She was formerly the booking producer for the network's show "Tipping Point with Liz Wheeler."

SPOTTED AT THE FOUR SEASONS -- at separate tables for breakfast this morning: David Rubenstein and Mike Froman, Fred Hochberg and former Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.), David Rothkopf, Melissa Moss.

ENGAGED -- Blake Major, a lobbyist with AIG, on Friday got engaged to **Amanda Cook**, a lobbyist for the Children's Hospital Association. He proposed on the Speaker's Balcony. The two, who met online, celebrated with drinks at Hank's on the Hill. ***Pic*** <http://bit.ly/2AckyHH>

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- Brittan Specht, senior policy adviser to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, on Saturday married **Lindsey Melody**, counsel for the Republican commissioners at the FEC. The ceremony was at St. Peter's on Capitol Hill, and the reception was at District Winery. The couple met online in 2013. ***Pic*** <http://politi.co/2jOAluN>

SPOTTED: best man Chris Tudor, Scott Parkinson, Matt Dickerson, Will Dunham, Rachel and Taylor Barkley, Brittany Madni, Dwayne Carson, Noelani Bonifacio, Rebekah Armstrong, Erika and Jon Walter and Steve Koncar

-- **Philip Minardi**, Expedia's head of public affairs and an Erik Paulsen alum, this weekend married **Hayley Kropog**, senior account executive at LEWIS Global Communications and an Edelman alum. "The Chicago gentleman met his southern belle on a blind date at Masa 14 almost 5 years ago. The celebrations were held in New Orleans, at the Immaculate Conception Church and followed by a reception at the Blue Room at The Roosevelt Hotel." ***Pics*** <http://bit.ly/2AK6rz9> ... <http://bit.ly/2kmayd5> ... <http://bit.ly/2BzpW0u> ... <http://bit.ly/2C2JxU9>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - David Rutz, managing editor of the Washington Free Beacon, and **Maggie Rutz** welcomed Emma Grace Rutz. ***Pic*** <http://bit.ly/2kXDuMy>

-- **Jessica Collins**, deputy communications director for the House Judiciary Committee, and **TJ Collins** on Thursday welcomed James Fincher ("Finn") Collins, weighing 8 pounds, 12 ounces and measuring 20.5 inches. ***Pic*** <http://bit.ly/2AMpJ7b>

--**Blaine Kelly**, communications director for the Ohio Republican Party and a Trump

campaign alum, and **Mollie Kelly**, an associate at J.P. Morgan, welcomed Owen Edward Kelly on Sunday morning. "Baby and mother are both doing great!"

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** Boeing is the preferred supplier for UAE commercial aviation requirements. Over the past 10 years, UAE customers have ordered \$150 billion in Boeing planes, supporting 781,000 jobs in the US and injecting billions of dollars into the US economy. In 2016, the US had a \$19 billion trade surplus with the UAE, America's third largest trade surplus globally.

UAE airlines have received or have on order more than 800 Boeing aircraft. Emirates is the world's largest operator of Boeing 777s and has 40 Boeing 787-10s currently on order. Flydubai operates an all-Boeing fleet of planes and has a total of 361 Boeing 737s on order. Etihad operates 24 Boeing 777s with 25 more on order, and has an additional \$8.7 billion order for Boeing 787-10s. UAE airlines now serve 11 US gateway cities from Dubai and Abu Dhabi with more than 250 weekly nonstop flights.

<http://politi.co/2kaKWj8> *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Tue 9/12/2017 5:05:16 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by CTIA: CASSIDY, GRAHAM to meet with MCCONNELL -- MNUCHIN says TRUMP's 15 percent corporate tax rate difficult to achieve -- HOPE HICKS now permanent White House comms director

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TWO BITES OF NEWS ...

-- **SENS. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-S.C.)** and **BILL CASSIDY (R-LA.)** are meeting with **SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY.)** this afternoon about their health care proposal.

-- **THE WHITE HOUSE** seems pretty confident that they will be able to release a tax-reform framework from the Big Six at the end of the month. But we're sensing some skepticism from House and Senate sources that they'll be able to meet that deadline.

STEVEN MNUCHIN spoke at CNBC's "Delivering Alpha" conference -- "[M]nuchin insisted that a tax overhaul would happen this year. 'We're going to get this done by the end of the year,' Mnuchin said, adding that the administration is 'super focused' on the goal following the three-month debt limit and government funding extension passed last week. ...

"Mnuchin said that President Donald Trump's goal of chopping the corporate tax rate to 15 percent could be difficult to achieve. 'I don't know if we'll be able to achieve that given the budget issues. But we're going to get this down to a very competitive level,' Mnuchin said." <http://cnb.cx/2wYcUEY>

-- **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:** Mnuchin said he thought it was "a mistake" to break up the CEO councils. ... Repealing and replacing Obamacare is not the focus at the moment, he said.

Good Tuesday afternoon. STORY OF THE DAY -- MCCONNELL SPEAKS to NYT's **CARL HULSE -- "McConnell Says Democrats' Glee on Debt Limit Deal Was Premature":** "'Let's put it this way,' Mr. McConnell, the Kentucky Republican and majority leader, said Monday in an interview for The New York Times podcast 'The New Washington.' 'The deal is not quite as good as my counterpart thought it was.' The reason? Mr. McConnell said that he insisted the newly passed legislation preserve

Treasury's ability to apply 'extraordinary measures' and shift money within government accounts to pay off debt and extend federal borrowing power. That will delay the need for another increase in the debt limit well beyond the December deadline that Democrats have been trumpeting as their big moment of leverage. And Mr. McConnell said he did so over the objections of Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader and aforementioned counterpart. ...

"Clearly irked by the perception that he got rolled by Democrats when President Trump accepted their proposal for a three-month extension of the debt limit and government funding, Mr. McConnell, an avid college football fan, said Democrats 'spiked the ball in the end zone a little too early.' Instead, he said, he used his majority leader's position to make something of an end run. 'One of the advantages of being the majority leader is you control the paper,' Mr. McConnell said, referring to legislation. 'I wrote it in such a way that it does not prevent what is frequently done, which is the use of extraordinary measures. The minority leader and his team were trying to get us not to write it that way, but I did write it that way and that is the way it passed.'"

<http://nyti.ms/2xu0KGT>

-- LET'S UNPACK THIS A BIT: McConnell is right. He, along with Speaker Paul Ryan and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, tried to convince Trump that he didn't want another debt ceiling vote this year. What ended up happening didn't really anger Ryan and McConnell, which is why they didn't put up a fight. But now the debt limit will likely be pushed to 2018 -- due to the extraordinary measures we've explained here a few times -- and that could stunt Trump's legislative agenda.

MCCAIN TO CONTINUE TREATMENT -- Statement from his office: "Senator McCain received an MRI at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland yesterday. Following the advice of his doctors, Senator McCain will continue to receive targeted radiation and chemotherapy treatments at the NIH while maintaining a regular work schedule in the United States Senate."

THE FOUR SEASONS BREAKFAST CROWD -- JACK QUINN with George Crowley ... Bill Kennard, former U.S. ambassador to the EU, with Robert Mandell, former U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg ... Don Baer ... former U.S. ambassador to Belgium Howard Gutman with Andrew Smith of McGuire Woods ... former U.S. ambassador to Slovakia Tod Sedgwick

HOPE HICKS IN CHARGE, PERMANENTLY -- Bloomberg's **JEN JACOBS** and **JUSTIN SINK:** "Hicks, who has been serving as interim communications director, will now lead the communications team on a permanent basis, two White House officials said. She's viewed by staff as a strong leader because she is one of the president's most trusted aides and therefore secure in her standing."

STOP US IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE -- BLOOMBERG -- SELLING TAX REFORM: "President Donald Trump plans an aggressive travel schedule, taking him to as many as 13 states over the next seven weeks, to sell the idea of a tax overhaul as

the administration tries to avoid repeating the communications failures of its attempt to repeal Obamacare. ... The strategy was revealed by top advisers to about 40 allies during a closed-door meeting last week. It calls for the president to visit states he won where a Democratic senator is up for re-election next year, including Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, said three people who attended."

<https://bloom.bg/2h0Gge0>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture. Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

ON THE PRESIDENT'S MIND -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:56 a.m.: "Fascinating to watch people writing books and major articles about me and yet they know nothing about me & have zero access. #FAKE NEWS!"

THE LATEST ON THE HURRICANE -- 12:06 p.m. -- MIAMI (AP): "Utility says much of Florida's east coast could have power back by Sunday; other areas could take 10 days or more."

TODAY'S MUST READ -- WAPO'S PAUL KANE speaks to **LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA -- "Lin-Manuel Miranda comes to Washington - with lessons from the era of Hamilton"** <http://wapo.st/2xuEva5>

--HAPPENING TONIGHT -- MIRANDA is getting the 2017 Freedom Award from the U.S. Capitol Historical Society at 6 p.m. in Statuary Hall.

TRUMP INC. -- "Trump Beach Resort Wants More Foreign Guest Workers," by BuzzFeed's Jessica Garrison, Jeremy Singer-Vine and Ken Bensinger: "The Trump International Beach Resort, in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, has asked the government for permission to hire more temporary foreign workers to labor as housekeepers, according to records posted by the Department of Labor on Monday. The resort, which is near Miami, licenses President Donald Trump's name but is owned by the International Resorts Management Group. It asked for permission to bring in 10 housekeepers, claiming no Americans wanted the jobs. The positions pay \$10.64 an hour." <http://bzfd.it/2ffHke1>

A BANNON UPDATE ...

-- THE BANNON/TRUMP BACKCHANNEL: WSJ's Julie Steinberg and Steven Russolillo, with a Hong Kong dateline: "Mr. Bannon said he talks to Mr. Trump every two to three days, and that the pair last spoke the previous night for an hour, according to two people who attended the closed-door meeting with the former presidential adviser. The gathering, at a Grand Hyatt hotel restaurant, included a group of about 20 money managers. ... Mr. Bannon at the Tuesday lunch described himself as a 'schmendrick'

engineer -- invoking the Yiddish word for 'foolish person' -- while Mr. Trump was the architect of the campaign, the attendee said. Mr. Bannon said while he had influence before in the White House, he now has 'power' at Breitbart." <http://on.wsj.com/2jINVYN>

-- BANNON'S MEDIA FOOTPRINT: "How Steve Bannon Is Preparing For War," by BuzzFeed's Tarini Parti and Adrian Carrasquillo: "What sources close to him say they are most confident about are Bannon's plans to increase his media footprint, with his team discussing how to ramp up the broadcasting of Bannon's economic nationalist ideas through television and radio. A confidante who recently spoke to Bannon said he is working on a book and his three hours of airtime on SiriusXM will now double to six hours with the addition of a nightly show.

"A separate source close to Bannon said Bannon has talked with Christopher Ruddy, a Trump friend and the CEO of Newsmax Media, about bringing him on to work on a TV effort. The Sinclair Broadcast Group, a conservative-leaning television company with a growing presence in local markets around the country, also reached out to Bannon about possibly producing content for their networks." <http://bzfd.it/2h1oIP6>

AIR FORCE ONE WATCH -- "Trump is visit U.S. Virgin Islands in wake of Irma," by The Virgin Islands Consortium's Ernice Gilbert: "President Donald Trump will visit the U.S. Virgin Islands 'within the next six or seven days,' Governor Kenneth Mapp said during a press conference at Government House late Monday. Mr. Mapp said he had a conversation with the president today, and Mr. Trump expressed his full support for the territory in providing disaster relief, following the calamitous state Hurricane Irma left St. Thomas and St. John in.

"Mr. Trump wants 'to see firsthand the damages of the territory, and to get on-ground reports of the federal operation, to ensure that the people of the Virgin Islands are receiving recovery as fast as humanly possible, and that the assets of the federal government were being appropriately deployed,' the governor said. Mr. Trump said he loves the U.S. Virgin Islands, Mr. Mapp added." <http://bit.ly/2xuwuLR>

OOPS -- "Ted Cruz blames staffer for 'liking' porn tweet," by Louis Nelson and Burgess Everett <http://politi.co/2y2sMXb>

HMM... -- "Billionaire Tom Steyer's PAC donates \$1 million to help Virginia immigrant groups mobilize for November election," by WaPo's Antonio Olivo: "California billionaire Tom Steyer is giving \$1 million to immigrant advocates in Virginia to mobilize voters in November's state elections, part of an effort to fuel a Democratic resurgence in the Trump era by focusing on a swing state that has embodied the nation's polarized political climate. The contribution by Steyer's super PAC, NextGen America, aims to tap into voter resentment over President Trump's immigration policies, in particular the travel ban against immigrants from six Muslim-majority countries and plans to phase out an Obama administration program that protected from deportation 800,000 undocumented immigrants who arrived here illegally as children." <http://wapo.st/2h1MQ44>

JOB OF THE DAY: Fraud analyst for Equifax. "The Fraud Monitoring Analyst is responsible for analysis and controls maintaining review of systems and processes supporting identity and fraud. These analysts are responsible for monitoring; analyzing and investigating interactions to identify fraudulent access or attempted access to Equifax consumer facing systems in near real-time ... This function is a critical line of defense for Equifax and integral to business goals." ***District Daybook has the listing*** <http://bit.ly/2jkNKgl>

-- **"Ousted NSC Official Takes Job at Oracle,"** by Just Security's Kate Brannen: "Ezra Cohen-Watnick, who was fired from the National Security Council in August, has landed a new job at the Washington, D.C. office of Oracle, the Silicon Valley software giant, according to two sources with knowledge of his move. His new job title is not confirmed and the company declined a request for comment." <http://bit.ly/2w5tZiR>

TOP-ED - "You Won't Like Mexico When It's Angry: President Trump's insults are pushing the Mexican political system into dangerous territory," by Jorge Guajardo, former Mexican ambassador to China, in POLITICO Magazine: "[W]hat would happen if Mexico were to break with the U.S. on NAFTA? ... The first item off the table would likely be cooperation on issues of migration. ... Next up would be cooperation on the drug war. ... The fight against terrorism would suffer. Since 9/11, Mexico has arguably been the biggest obstacle against terrorists trying to reach U.S. soil. ... The list goes on: health, environment, transportation, water, disease control. No two countries in the world cooperate in as many areas as Mexico and the United States." <http://politi.co/2xuSfLP>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Blagojevich gives two interviews -- Florida starts Irma recovery <http://politi.co/2y2cNs1>

FIRST-PERSON -- MARC CAPUTO in POLITICO Magazine, "This Is What It's Like to Ride Out a Hurricane: Why do people stay behind? This is why I didn't evacuate": "Over the years, these storms taught me to respect nature and fear man. I covered them as a reporter; I endured them as a Florida resident. They showed me how wind can wrap steel around a tree and how boats get flung on dry land while cars submerge. ... How desperate people without power, food or gas can be far more dangerous than any storm. And, perhaps most importantly, how something will go wrong if it can-but you're never sure what that something is.

"Hurricane Irma would teach me that lesson, again, like no other. People who have never lived through a hurricane often have a hard time understanding why anyone would stay in the path of one. Are you stupid? Get out of there! But everyone has their reasons, or rationalizations. And when you've survived a few of these things, you figure: What's one more?" <http://politi.co/2y2gEoP>

MEDIAWATCH -- JAMES ASTILL, Washington correspondent for The Economist, has started writing the magazine's Lexington column about American politics. He previously was political editor and Bagehot columnist. **David Rennie** will be moving to Asia for The

Economist next year.

SPOTTED: Former FBI Director James Comey dining at Capital Grille last night ... former Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), Dennis Wharton, Ted Johnson, and Kim Hart at lunch at Greenhouse at the Jefferson Hotel ... At Bombay Club yesterday: Matt Viser, Rick Klein, James Hohmann, AB Stoddard, Jen Epstein, Jonathan Last, Jen Rubin, Doyle McManus and David Catanese for a media lunch sponsored by the New Center (<http://bit.ly/2eTC7YM>) with speakers Bill Kristol and Bill Galston

TRANSITIONS -- OBAMA ALUMNI -- ERIC FANNING, former Secretary of the Army, has joined the Board of Advisors of the Truman Center for National Policy.

--"RNC Announces First Wave Of State Director Hires" for 17 states:
<http://bit.ly/2f2VYZj>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - OBAMA ALUMNI -- Michael Pan, special adviser at the Open Society Foundation and former director for strategic planning at the NSC and alum of the U.S. mission to the U.N. under Susan Rice, and **Eva Bonime**, deputy political director at SEIU 32BJ, welcomed Cassie Safir Pan over the weekend, at 6lb. 15oz, 19.5 inches. "Big sister 3-year old Edie came up with the name."

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by Morgan Stanley

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Driving the Day

Good Monday morning. WASHINGTON REPUBLICANS' BIG WEEK -- IN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS: Capitol Hill Republicans will attempt to pass a massive rewrite of the nation's health care laws. They'll unveil a framework to rewrite the tax code. They'll work to renew the FAA's authority. They'll attempt to hold on to a Senate seat in Alabama. The health care bill could easily fail, and the establishment's choice for that Senate seat -- Sen. Luther Strange -- might lose. Buckle up.

BREAKING OVERNIGHT -- THE GRAHAM-CASSIDY PAYOFF, from Rachana Pradhan and Dan Diamond: "Senate Republicans have updated their last-ditch Obamacare repeal bill in an effort to win over skeptical party members ahead of a key deadline this week, according to a copy obtained by POLITICO on Sunday night. ...

"The revised bill includes new provisions that would steer more federal funding to Alaska, Arizona and Kentucky. All three states are home to pivotal GOP swing votes who either have opposed or expressed concerns with the bill -- Sens. John McCain, Rand Paul and Lisa Murkowski. However, Democrats said Senate Republicans are using misleading numbers to obscure massive funding cuts still in the Graham-Cassidy plan.

"Under the revised text, the bill's authors now project increases in federal funding for Arizona (14 percent), Kentucky (4 percent) and Alaska (3 percent), which would have seen declines under the previous version, according to a leaked analysis from Trump's health department. In particular, Murkowski's home state would uniquely benefit from Sec. 129, which allows the state with the highest separate poverty guideline -- Alaska -- to receive a 25 percent hike in federal matching funds for Medicaid."

<http://politi.co/2fru49p> ... **The bill** <http://bit.ly/2yAKkd4>

-- OK, LET'S TRANSLATE: At this moment, senior Senate Republican aides seem skeptical this will turn the process around. In our conversations, one theme keeps coming up: much of the opposition to the bill is fundamental. Many senators don't like how it was put together, and say it's the product of a bad process. Take Sen. Rand Paul's (R-Ky.) interview with the Post's Bob Costa. He says he would support a bill -- as long as it does not block grant funds to states. In other words, he would support a bill, as long as it's not this bill. <http://wapo.st/2xE87Lh> Momentum is everything on Capitol Hill. And right now, this bill does not have momentum.

-- WHAT SOUTH CAROLINA IS READING ABOUT LINDSEY GRAHAM -- POST AND COURIER: "After days in the limelight, Lindsey Graham's health care bill about to reach a bitter end," by Jamie Lovegrove in Columbia: "Never in all of his 24-year political career has U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham been in higher demand than he was this week.

"As the Seneca Republican spearheaded a last-ditch Hail Mary to replace Obamacare, he was in constant communication with the most powerful people in the nation. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence checked in with Graham repeatedly to gauge the bill's progress and ask what they could do to help. On Tuesday, Pence invited Graham aboard Air Force Two for strategy meetings during a trip from New York to Washington, D.C., before joining him at a Senate GOP lunch to lobby his colleagues.

"In one particularly unusual episode, Graham was on the phone Thursday afternoon with Pence when Trump interrupted. Pence politely hesitated, before Graham put him at ease. 'You should definitely take the president's call,' Graham told him, laughing at the extraordinary nature of the situation. He later said he had never imagined that he would some day get bumped off a call with the vice president by the president. Pence called him back afterwards. In the middle of a radio interview later that day, Graham received yet another call from the White House. He turned off his phone and said he could ring them back later." <http://bit.ly/2xriims>

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- "Save My Care" is going up with a six-figure ad on cable and network TV urging Senate Republicans to reject Graham-Cassidy. **The ad** <http://bit.ly/2xz4YvA>

-- CNN will host a debate between Cassidy, Graham and Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) at 9 p.m.

SIREN -- JOSH DAWSEY, "Kushner used private email to conduct White House business": "Presidential son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner has corresponded with other administration officials about White House matters through a private email account set up during the transition last December, part of a larger pattern of Trump administration aides using personal email accounts for government business.

"Kushner uses his private account alongside his official White House email account, sometimes trading emails with senior White House officials, outside advisers and others about media coverage, event planning and other subjects, according to four people familiar with the correspondence. POLITICO has seen and verified about two dozen emails. ...

"Aides who have exchanged emails with Kushner on his private account since President Donald Trump took office in January include former chief of staff Reince Priebus, former chief strategist Steve Bannon, National Economic Council director Gary Cohn, and spokesman Josh Raffel, according to emails described to or shown to POLITICO. In some cases, those White House officials have emailed Kushner's account first, said people familiar with the messages. ...

"Kushner and his wife, Ivanka Trump, set up their private family domain late last year before moving to Washington from New York, according to people with knowledge of events as well as publicly available internet registration records. At the time, Kushner -- who served as a senior campaign adviser -- was expected to be named to a White House role, while Ivanka Trump was publicly saying she didn't plan to work in her father's administration. Kushner's representatives declined to detail the server or security measures on it." <http://politi.co/2xCIZFL>

PETER BAKER in the NYT, **"A Divider Not a Uniter, Trump Widens the Breach":** "Over the course of just 17 hours this weekend, President Trump assailed John McCain, Chuck Schumer, Stephen Curry, the National Football League, Roger Goodell, Iran and Kim Jong-un - the 'Little Rocket Man.' And that was on his day off. ... While he has restrained himself for brief stretches, his penchant for punching eventually reasserts itself. Never in modern times has an occupant of the Oval Office seemed to reject so thoroughly the nostrum that a president's duty is to bring the country together. Relentlessly pugnacious, energized by a fight, unwilling to let any slight go unanswered, Mr. Trump has made himself America's apostle of anger, its deacon of divisiveness. ...

"In his brief career as president and a candidate for president, Mr. Trump has attacked virtually every major institution in American life: Congress, the courts, Democrats, Republicans, the news media, the Justice Department, Hollywood, the military, NATO, the intelligence agencies, the cast of 'Hamilton,' the cast of 'Saturday Night Live,' the pope and now professional sports. He has attacked the Trump administration itself, or at least selected parts of it (see Sessions, Jeff), and even the United States of America ('you think our country's so innocent?')." ***With cameos by Chris Ruddy, Garry Wills, Pete Wehner and H.W. Brands*** <http://nyti.ms/2xqhE8Y>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** It's making an impact, and interest is stronger than ever: 75% of individual investors-and 86% of Millennials-are interested in sustainable investing. [Read more from Morgan Stanley.](#) *****

TRUMP VS. THE NFL -- NEW YORK TAB COVERS -- N.Y. POST: "KNEE THE PEOPLE: 200 NFL'ers in anthem protest to defy Trump" <http://nyp.st/2wfxShi> ... **N.Y.**

DAILY NEWS: "KNEE TO THE GROIN: NFL blitzes Trump with all-out protests"

<http://nydn.us/2ht8MoV>

-- **"President's criticisms spark more protests at NFL games,"** by AP's Arnie Stapleton: "[A]bout 150 players sat, knelt or raised their fists in defiance during early games. A week ago, just six players protested. Most of the players on Sunday locked arms with their teammates - some standing, others kneeling - in show of solidarity. A handful of teams stayed off the field until after 'The Star-Spangled Banner' to avoid the issue altogether." <http://bit.ly/2ymeQGE>

-- **"Donald Trump's Allies Join His Crusade Against The NFL,"** by BuzzFeed's Henry J. Gomez: "A political group with close ties to President Donald Trump is amplifying his attack on professional athletes who kneel during the national anthem as a form of protest. 'Turn off the NFL,' reads a digital ad produced by the nonprofit America First Policies, which planned to begin spreading the message on social media Sunday afternoon. The ad includes a photo with Trump, hand over his heart, and a #TakeAStandNotAKnee hashtag. It follows Trump's recent remarks, first delivered during a Friday night speech in Alabama, aimed at football players who have protested police brutality and other causes." <http://bzfd.it/2wfg13s>

-- **ALEX BURNS** on **A1** of the **NYT**: "[M]r. Trump may also have risked a more complicated backlash than he is accustomed to. The episode follows close on the heels of Mr. Trump's comments in August equating anti-racism protesters with neo-Nazis, a moment that threatened to destabilize his presidency. And professional athletes are not a traditional punching bag for Republicans, like Hollywood actors or the news media. With the advent of Twitter and other social media, admired athletes like Mr. Curry and LeBron James -- who chastised Mr. Trump on Saturday -- have vast personal followings with whom they can communicate directly, bypassing owners and the news media, unlike sports heroes of the past." <http://nyti.ms/2fkPTUz>

-- **WSJ EDITORIAL BOARD: "The Politicization of Everything:** Everybody loses in the Trump-NFL brawl over the national anthem." <http://on.wsj.com/2ynzfLJ>

-- **@realDonaldTrump at 3:32 p.m.** : "Courageous Patriots have fought and died for our great American Flag --- we MUST honor and respect it! MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" ... **at 6:25 p.m.:** "Sports fans should never condone players that do not stand proud for their National Anthem or their Country. NFL should change policy!"

TRUMP'S COMMENTS TO POOL yesterday -- **Q:** "Do you agree with your Treasury secretary that NFL players' 1st Amendment rights should be off the field?" **TRUMP:** "I think that the flag has to be respected. Our country has to be respected. There's plenty of room to do other things, but our country has to be respected. And I've always felt very strongly about that, and by the way, most people agree with me."

Q: "What about the players' first amendment rights?" **TRUMP:** "They have rights. We all have rights. But when you're on that field, and, you know, there's a situation going on,

this is a great, great country, and we have a great flag, and they should respect our flag. They're making a lot of money. I'm not begrudging anything. I'm just saying they have to respect our flag, and they have to respect our country." ... **Q:** "Any comment on your cabinet secretaries' flights? Charter flights? Private travel, Mr. President? Should they be using charter flights at the taxpayers' expense?" **TRUMP:** "Who did?" **Q:** "Your treasury secretary. Sec. Mnuchin. HHS Sec. Price."

TRUMP: "Oh, I don't think he took the flight. I think if you check your records, he didn't take the flight. Why don't you check your records before you -" **A:** "He took a flight from New York back to D.C." **TRUMP:** "Why don't you check your records before you make a statement. As I understood it - I don't know much about it - I haven't heard about it, but I understand he never took that flight." **Q:** "He flew from New York back to DC and HHS Sec. Price also -" **TRUMP:** "You'll have to ask him about that. I don't know. As far as Sec. Price is concerned, that's different. We're looking into it." **Q:** "Do you respect the investigations of these IGs?" **TRUMP:** "Always. Always. Thanks very much."

-- **Garrett M. Graff (@vermontgmg):** "Your periodic reminder an entire island of millions of Americans is without power, in a desperate situation, and Trump is fighting the NFL."

PUERTO RICO UPDATE -- "Official: Hurricane Maria set Puerto Rico back decades," by AP's Danica Coto in San Juan: "Puerto Rico's nonvoting representative in the U.S. Congress said Sunday that Hurricane Maria's destruction has set the island back decades, even as authorities worked to assess the extent of the damage. 'The devastation in Puerto Rico has set us back nearly 20 to 30 years,' said Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez. 'I can't deny that the Puerto Rico of now is different from that of a week ago. The destruction of properties, of flattened structures, of families without homes, of debris everywhere. The island's greenery is gone.'"

<http://bit.ly/2xCxXz9>

--**"Puerto Rico's governor calls for greater federal response to Maria,"** by Colin Wilhelm: "Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello called on the Pentagon to provide more search-and-rescue help and humanitarian resources to help the beleaguered island recover from "complete devastation" from Hurricane Maria. 'We need more resources from the Department of Defense so we can get helicopters and resources,' Rossello told POLITICO in a phone interview Sunday night. 'We know that there are capabilities in the surrounding areas, helicopters, planes and so forth,' he said. 'And our petition is for us to be able to use them.'" <http://politi.co/2htxuFF>

-- **"Puerto Rico governor: 'We still need some more help' from Washington,"** by WaPo's Ed O'Keefe: <http://wapo.st/2fkjlot>

WAPO'S DAMIAN PALETTA: "GOP leaders circulating plan that could end up as massive tax cut for the wealthy": "White House officials and Republican leaders are preparing a set of broad income and corporate tax cuts while also looking for a way to keep their plan from being a massive windfall for the wealthiest Americans, two people

familiar with the plan said.

"Party leaders are quietly circulating proposals to lower the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 20 percent and lower the top individual income tax rate from 39.6 percent to 35 percent, according to the people familiar with the plan. White House advisers are divided over whether to cut the top individual tax rate, and Republican leaders, aware the plan could be construed as a huge giveaway to the wealthy, are trying to design features to the package that would ensure that the rich don't get too large a share of the plan's tax relief.

"Top White House negotiators and key GOP leaders have agreed on those targets, but apparently President Trump has not. On Sunday, as he was about to board Air Force One in New Jersey, Trump told reporters he hoped to see the corporate tax rate lowered to 15 percent, a level that his own negotiators had privately dismissed weeks ago. 'We'll see what happens, but I hope it's going to be 15 percent,' he told reporters. 'But it's going to be substantially lower so we bring jobs back to the country.'"

<http://wapo.st/2xzEH0c>

ALABAMA SPECIAL -- "Strange in trouble in Alabama, White House and GOP fear: A victory by insurgent front-runner Roy Moore could trigger a wave of primary challenges against incumbent Republicans," by Alex Isenstadt in Birmingham, Alabama: "The White House and senior Republicans are deeply worried about Sen. Luther Strange's chances in Tuesday's GOP runoff here - even after unleashing the full weight of the party machinery to stop his opponent, flame-throwing conservative Roy Moore. ...

"The sheer breadth of the anti-Moore campaign has stunned Alabama's political class: It includes non-stop TV ads, a meticulously-crafted get-out-the-vote effort, and detailed, oppo-research-filled debate prep sessions for Strange. ... Much of the assault has played out on the air. During the final week of the contest, a trifecta of pro-Strange GOP groups - the Senate Leadership Fund, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and National Rifle Association - flooded the state with about \$2.5 million in TV and radio ads. Moore was confronting a nearly five-to-one spending deficit on the airwaves, according to media buying totals provided to POLITICO." <http://politi.co/2xtAtFL>

-- BIG IN FAIRHOPE: "Nigel Farage to Campaign for Roy Moore in Alabama Senate Race," by NYT's Matthew Haag: "Nigel Farage, the right-wing British politician and outspoken supporter of President Trump, plans to campaign in Alabama on Monday against the president's preferred candidate in a crucial Republican Senate runoff.

"Mr. Farage's endorsement of Roy Moore, a former State Supreme Court justice who leads in the polls before the election on Tuesday, lines up another anti-establishment voice in opposition to Mr. Trump. He plans to speak at a rally for Mr. Moore that will also include Stephen K. Bannon, the former chief strategist to Mr. Trump."

<http://nyti.ms/2jX3PJL>

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "Trump to replace travel ban with restrictions on more

countries," by Josh Gerstein and Ted Hesson: "President Donald Trump's controversial travel ban will morph into a new set of restrictions on travelers from an expanded set of countries, U.S. officials announced Sunday night as major parts of the order were close to expiring. The current policy, which denies visas to citizens of six majority Muslim countries, will be replaced by a new set of travel limits on eight countries, including all but one of those on the previous list.

"The nations facing indefinite travel restrictions under the new policy are Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen ... Existing visa-holders are exempt, and waivers will remain available for travelers with U.S. ties, although those exemptions appear to be narrowed in the new directive. One country on the current list, Sudan, was dropped from the restricted roster - effective immediately. The new countries and the revised waiver policy are set to take effect Oct. 18."

<http://politi.co/2y2WMP4>

-- "Germany's Merkel clings to power amid far right surge," by Matthew Karnitschnig and Janosch Delcker in Politico Europe: "Angela Merkel secured a fourth term as chancellor on Sunday, but her election victory was overshadowed by a far-right surge that will put an openly racist party into the center of German politics for the first time since World War II and send shockwaves across the European continent and beyond.

"The anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) garnered around 13 percent of the vote, according to preliminary returns - a result expected to upend the consensus-driven culture that has marked Germany's postwar political landscape. Though Merkel secured another term, her center-right bloc recorded its worst result since 1949, winning around 33 percent of the vote ... The center-left Social Democrats (SPD) fared even worse, scoring about 21 percent, the worst postwar finish for a party that has been a pillar of German political life since the 19th century." <http://politi.co/2fkzdwi>

POWER PLAY -- BULLETIN at 5:14 a.m.: "TOKYO (AP) - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says he will dissolve lower house of parliament and call elections next month."

THE OPPOSITION -- "Dems launch \$15M campaign for lawyers to take on Trump," by Isaac Dove: "Democratic attorneys general, aiming to take on the Trump administration on a growing number of fronts, are planning to spend \$10 million to \$15 million to elect more of their own next year. The offensive comes as Democratic attorneys general have already challenged the White House's travel ban, its planned border wall, rollback of environmental regulations and President Donald Trump's business dealings. It's also part of a longer-term effort to build a bigger and more diverse bench for the party to draw on in gubernatorial and Senate races over the next decade." <http://politi.co/2htd7Zu>

TRUMP'S MONDAY -- PRESIDENT TRUMP will have lunch with VP Mike Pence and make an announcement on his "Administration's commitment to equipping the American

workforce for jobs of the future." He will have dinner with grassroots leaders.

TV TONIGHT -- "Hannity to interview Bannon at Moore rally on eve of Alabama Senate run-off," by Alex Isenstadt in Birmingham, Alabama: "Fox News host Sean Hannity will interview former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon live outside a Monday evening rally for former judge Roy Moore ... Bannon is set to speak at the Moore rally alongside 'Duck Dynasty' star Phil Robertson." <http://politi.co/2wQjkUJ>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Officials stand on the Seattle Seahawks sideline during the national anthem before an NFL game between the Seahawks and the Tennessee Titans on Sept. 24 in Nashville, Tenn. Neither team came out onto the field for the anthem. | Mark Zaleski/AP Photo

TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION -- "EPA chief Pruitt met with many corporate execs. Then he made decisions in their favor," by WaPo's Steven Mufson and Juliet Eilperin: "Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt has met regularly with corporate executives from the automobile, mining and fossil fuel industries - in several instances shortly before making decisions favorable to those interest groups, according to a copy of his schedule obtained by The Washington Post. There were, by comparison, only two environmental groups and one public health group on the schedule, which covers the months of April through early September. It is the broadest public release of Pruitt's schedule and it adds to understanding about how he makes decisions." <http://wapo.st/2xE9AB4>

THE WASHINGTON-VALLEY AXIS -- "Obama tried to give Zuckerberg a wake-up call over fake news on Facebook," by WaPo's Adam Entous, Elizabeth Dwoskin and Craig Timberg: "Nine days after Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg dismissed as 'crazy' the idea that fake news on his company's social network played a key role in the U.S. election, President Barack Obama pulled the youthful tech billionaire aside and delivered what he hoped would be a wake-up call. ...

"[H]uddled in a private room on the sidelines of a meeting of world leaders in Lima, Peru, two months before Trump's inauguration, Obama made a personal appeal to Zuckerberg to take the threat of fake news and political disinformation seriously. Unless Facebook and the government did more to address the threat, Obama warned, it would only get worse in the next presidential race. Zuckerberg acknowledged the problem posed by fake news. But he told Obama those messages weren't widespread on Facebook and that there was no easy fix." <http://wapo.st/2wQgDT2>

SUSAN GLASSER PODCAST - "Tony Blair thinks Americans are way too worried about Donald Trump-and not enough about Bernie Sanders. In a new interview for The

Global Politico, our weekly podcast on global affairs, he tells me that he's sure 'the same feelings that gave rise to Brexit gave rise to the election of Donald Trump' - but that the left-wing populism peddled by Sanders and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in Britain are not the answer, either. In our conversation, he bashed today's liberal leaders in both countries for 'solutions that look back to the '60s or '70s' and for preaching a form of feel-good 'identity politics' that will flop as an answer to Trumpism. ...

"Trump, he says, has correctly identified 'an extraordinary and one-off opportunity' to move toward a deal between Israel and Arab states that may finally be willing to 'move on' from the Palestinian issue. 'I do think there's a big opportunity there, and I think that the White House understands that,' Blair tells me, voicing an optimism that few other peace-process veterans share. 'I can't afford to be in a position of just treating President Trump as if he's part of a sort of interesting comedy show,' Blair says."

<http://politi.co/2jVlbpe> ... **Full transcript** <http://politi.co/2xzEqKT>

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : A Morgan Stanley survey found that interest in sustainable investing is stronger than ever, with 75% of individual investors polled- and 86% of Millennials-expressing interest. The survey examined the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of individual investors toward sustainable investing and considers the broader implications for investors, corporations and governments. [Read more.](#) *****

JUST POSTED - "The Untold Story of the Accidental Assassins of North Korea," by Doug Bock Clark in GQ: "The two women had the most audacious task. Killing the brother of the North Korean leader. Right out in the open, using deadly chemical weapons in an international airport. And the craziest thing? They had no idea what they'd gotten into." <http://bit.ly/2y1VB9s>

TOP-ED - TOM DONOHUE in the WSJ, **"A Nafta Exit Would Be a Rotten Deal":** "Hundreds of thousands of American jobs would be lost, and that's a conservative estimate. Heartland states that voted for President Trump would be hurt most, and angry voters would know exactly whom to blame. ... In light of these well-established facts, you'd think that threats to withdraw from Nafta-or proposals that inevitably would kill the deal-should be off the table. But they aren't. So here's an unequivocal warning: Undermining Nafta would be a grave and costly mistake that would hurt the very farmers, manufacturers, workers and families this White House purports to protect. Americans should do everything necessary to avert this grievous self-inflicted wound." <http://on.wsj.com/2xyU7So>

PLAYBOOK METRO SECTION -- "Big philanthropists flock to D.C.'s Bridge Park project to battle gentrification," by WaPo's Jonathan O'Connell: "The proposed 11th Street Bridge Park that would cross the Anacostia River continues to inspire big-name philanthropists to write big checks to revitalize some of the District's poorest neighborhoods, and help low-income residents prepare should an economic turnaround arrive. The latest is JPMorgan Chase & Co. Over the next three years, the financial giant agreed to donate \$10 million in Wards 7 and 8 of the District, including \$5 million

to preserve affordable housing for low-income residents as part of a proposal established by the Southeast D.C. non-profit organization planning the park, Building Bridges Across the River." <http://wapo.st/2fl7X0P>

MEDIAWATCH -- MICHAEL CALDERONE is back at POLITICO and taking the helm of the must-read Morning Media newsletter. Calderone will deliver fresh scoops, behind the scenes tidbits, and analysis of the top media stories straight to your inbox every morning. **Sign-up** <http://politi.co/1UjurKI> ... **His first edition today** <http://politi.co/2flPqkR>

Playbookers

SPOTTED at the Trump Hotel BLT Sunday night: Greta Van Susteren and husband John Coale huddling with Trump friend and confidant Newsmax Media CEO Chris Ruddy ... Roger Stone getting off the Acela in Union Station on Sunday night ... Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) sitting outside Bistro Bistro in Dupont last night with three friends.

SPOTTED last night at the National Symphony Orchestra's Season Opening Gala at the Kennedy Center with a special performance from Yo Yo Ma, in the trustees' box: Adrienne Arsht, Barbie Albritton, Patrick Steel, Kellyanne and George Conway, Alex Acosta, Dan Coats, Tom Bossert, Michael LaRosa, Robert Pullen and Luke Frazier ... at the performance: David Rubenstein, Andrea Mitchell and Alan Greenspan, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Paul Pelosi, Matt and Mercedes Schlapp, Vernon and Ann Jordan, Brett and Amy Baier, Mick Mulvaney, Lloyd and Ann Hand, former Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), Virginia Coyne, Dan Glickman and Ed Royce.

TRANSITIONS -- Kevin Lewis is departing President Obama's personal office at the end of next month as spokesman. Lewis, who worked with President Obama for more than ten years, began his working for Obama in 2006 after completing a fellowship program called "Yes We Can" created by then-Sen. Obama's PAC Hope Fund. **Katie Hill** will replace Lewis. She most recently was a consultant for Protect Our Care and is a previously an assistant press secretary and spokeswoman at the Obama White House.

...

... **Caleb Fisher** on Monday starts working for House GOP Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers as the new creative services manager. He previously was deputy comms director for Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-Texas). ... **Brittany Shepherd** is joining the IJR news team as a White House reporter.

WEEKEND WEDDING -- Gillum Ferguson, a speechwriter for Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, on Saturday married **Jordan Tillman**, an occupational therapist in private practice, in Nashville's Cathedral of the Incarnation. After the ceremony, "family and friends danced the night away in the Cheekwood Botanical Gardens. ... The couple

met at a party in DC a couple of years ago while wingman-ing/wingwoman-ing for their respective friends from high school, went AWOL together from said wing duties and the rest is history." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xz3UYO> ... <http://bit.ly/2wf4JmB> ... <http://bit.ly/2yzZ3Fd>

SPOTTED: Andrew Ferguson (father of the groom), Bill and Susan Kristol, P.J. O'Rourke, Jim Capretta, Nick and Mary Eberstadt, Ed McFadden, Sam Beaver, Austin Yager, Temple Moore

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- RYDER JONAH SHERMAN, son of Irene and Jake Sherman, was born Friday morning at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Northwest Washington. Ryder - the First Son of Playbook - arrived at 3:45 a.m. Friday, just on time for Friday's edition. Mom is doing great, and the Sherman family is happy to be at home.

-- **Kate Bedingfield**, VP of comms at Monumental Sports and Entertainment who continues to work as an advisor to VP Biden, and **David Kieve**, a partner at Hilltop Public Solutions, post on Facebook: "David, Hugh and I are so unbelievably proud to introduce Margaret Ruth Bedingfield Kieve. Margot arrived [Saturday] night and weighed in at 8lbs 7oz, besting her older brother by 4 ounces. She is taking to the world like a boss, and she is already an absolute delight to her father, her brother and me. Our hearts are overflowing." **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2fKicw7>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: former Defense Secretary **Robert Gates**, now at RiceHadleyGates, is 74. He's celebrating with a "BBQ dinner with wife Becky, neighbors and local friends, at home north of Seattle on a lake in the Cascade Mountains." **A fun fact about him:** "I have added a new line to my resume: forester. We now own 120 acres of mature cedar and fir trees on a nearby mountainside. The bears and mountain lions up there can't hold a candle to the predators inside the Beltway. Still, picture me in my John Deere Gator, armed with my chainsaw." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xzl34w>

BIRTHDAYS: Avis Cotton ... Vice's Josh Tyrangiel ... April Greener, research director for House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi ... Jack Howard, SVP of congressional and public affairs at the Chamber ... Jake Suski, managing director of global public affairs at New Fortress Energy ... Tim Reynolds ... AP's Evan Berland ... Danny Yadron, Guardian and WSJ alum now in the Stanford Law class of 2019 ... NY Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie is 5-0 ... Liz Margolis ... HuffPost senior justice reporter Ryan Reilly is 31 ... Brian Beutler ... Harrison Taylor Godfrey ... Emily Threadgill ... Gary Carpentier ... Emily Keech ... Jack Zahora ... George Hornedo ... Monica Wagner ... Shivonne Foster ... Kiley Smith, RNC, RGA and RSLC alum now at Stateside Associates (h/t Nick Everhart) ...

... **Nicco Mele**, director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard (h/ts Nancy Palmer and Ben Chang) ... Missy Owens, director of public affairs and diplomatic relations at Coca Cola (h/t Ben) ... Christine Harbin Hanson ... NY State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie ... Lila Shapiro of HuffPo ... Ed Newberry, global managing partner at Squire Patton Boggs ... Will Bergstrom ... John Elias ... Vivyan

Tran, audience development for WSJ ... Garlin Gilchrist II ... Lauren Loftus ... Dori Rutherford ... Sophie Reagan ... Justin Ward ... Pat Hart ... Politico's Bob King and John Lauinger ... George Sallas ... Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) is 56 ... Rep. Doris Matsui (D-Calif.) is 73 ... Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.) is 64 ... Dena Kozanas ... Nathaniel Ennis ... Kelly Parks Snider ... Amber Pfau ... Mimi Hall ... Jose Guardia ... Dave Peluso ... Chau Lan Ngo ... Rob Ritchie ... Shawn Burke ... Shawn Burke, the pride of Mason City, Iowa ... Philip Dufour ... Tim Connolly ... Jeannie Doherty (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley** : Interest in sustainable investing has held steady, and on some fronts grown, according to a new survey published by the Morgan Stanley Institute for Sustainable Investing. The second edition of the survey, Sustainable Signals, examines the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of individual investors towards sustainable investing and considers the broader implications for investors, corporations and governments. Individual investors, led by Millennials, increasingly see this as a normal and desirable element of any portfolio. 75% of investors-and 86% of Millennials-are interested in sustainable investing, a rise from the previous survey. Investors report an uptick in sustainability-minded investment decisions since 2015 (38%, up from 32%). "As widespread attention to sustainability continues to increase, consumers and investors alike are now more than ever factoring sustainability issues into their investment decisions," said Audrey Choi, Chief Sustainability Officer and Chief Marketing Officer at Morgan Stanley. [Read more of the results.](#) *****

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[View online](#)

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

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To: John Siciliano[jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 4:27:31 PM

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Halper, Evan[Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 9/26/2017 8:10:54 PM
Subject: RE: Here you go - let me know what else you need

Cool. Coffee in October.

From: Halper, Evan [mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 4:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Here you go - let me know what else you need

Posted today: <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-civil-servants-201709-story.html>

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 4:04 PM
To: Halper, Evan
Subject: RE: Here you go - let me know what else you need

When does or did your story run?

From: Halper, Evan [mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com]
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2017 11:30 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

got it. thanks,

From: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2017 11:29:47 AM
To: Halper, Evan
Subject: Re: Here you go - let me know what else you need

I have a minor typo -- should say Mr. Cox said he ...

On Sep 21, 2017, at 11:40 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.”
– EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Background Without Attribution – As Everything Below Is In The Public Domain ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Betsy Southerland questioned Pruitt’s decision to partner with states to protect the environment. “Southerland questioned Pruitt’s belief that the EPA and federal environmental standards were guilty of ‘running roughshod over states’ rights.” ([The Huffington Post](#), 08/02/17)

Governor Dayton (DFL-MN) praised Administrator Pruitt for working with the states and even said he didn’t want the regional EPA offices micromanaging his state. “Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as ‘productive and cordial’ and said he’s hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. ‘We don’t believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,’ Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour.” ([Minnesota Public Radio](#), 07/19/17)

According to McClatchy, Congress will move forward with their own budget. “Trump’s fellow Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but even so lawmakers are expected to move forward with their own budget blueprint this spring, as they traditionally have done.” ([McClatchy](#), 03/16/17)

The White House’s Budget no matter who is in power has become increasingly irrelevant as Congress has the power of the purse. “First, no matter who has been in the White House in recent years the president’s budget has become increasingly irrelevant to what, if anything, gets done. This is not Obama-dependent: it has been happening over the past few decades.” ([Forbes](#), 02/01/16)

In 2015, President Obama’s budget received 1 vote. “President Obama’s budget suffered its latest ignominious defeat when the Senate rejected it on a 98-1 vote Tuesday evening, capping off the first votes of the budget season.” ([The Washington Times](#), 03/24/15)

In 2012, not a single person in the Senate or the House voted for President Obama’s budget. “President Obama’s budget suffered a second embarrassing defeat Wednesday, when senators voted 99-0 to reject it. Coupled with the House’s rejection in March, 414-0, that means Mr. Obama’s budget has failed to win a single vote in support this year.” ([The Washington Times](#), 05/16/12)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he expects Congress to ignore the budget. “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has already said he expects the Republican-led Congress to largely ignore the proposal, saying in an interview last week with Bloomberg News that early versions reflected

priorities that "aren't necessarily ours." ([Bloomberg](#), 05/22/17)

In 2016, Elizabeth Southerland made \$249,000.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2015, Elizabeth Southerland made \$183,300.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2014, Elizabeth Southerland made \$181,500.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2013, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2012, Elizabeth Southerland made \$179,700.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

In 2011, Elizabeth Southerland made \$215,640.
(<https://www.federalpay.org/employees/environmental-protection-agency/southerland-elizabeth>, Accessed 07/31/17)

From: Halper, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Halper@latimes.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2017 9:35 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: LA Times questions -- civil service

Good morning:

I am reaching out for comment from the agency for a story about the civil service under the Trump administration. Does the EPA have a response to the concerns raised by recently departed employees such as Betsy Southerland and Michael Cox – and echoed by advocacy groups and lawmakers -- that it is sidelining its own scientific research and scientists in pursuit of the Trump political agenda? Has its approach to taking input from career staff changed with this administration?

You can reach me at 916.201.6398 if you would prefer to discuss in an interview. My deadline is 3:30 p.m. today. Thanks very much for your attention to this.

Best,

Evan Halper

National Reporter

Los Angeles Times

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Mon 10/16/2017 12:02:13 PM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle, presented by the National Confectioners Association: McCONNELL, TRUMP MEET FOR LUNCH – Senate eyes critical budget vote this week – BIPARTISAN HEALTH CARE DEAL IN THE WORKS? – Showdown in the Sunshine State

10/16/2017 08:00 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

With an assist from Daniel Lippman

LUNCH BUDDIES - President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell will meet for lunch today as the GOP enters a critical week in its quest to enact tax reform. McConnell and Trump have an icy relationship, which was on full display in recent months, but the president needs the Kentucky Republican if he wants to end the year with at least one major legislative achievement. The Senate will vote on its budget this week, a step necessary to unlocking the fast-track budget tool known as reconciliation, which will allow Republicans to pass a tax bill without any Democratic votes.

'The end of Mitch McConnell': Trump called McConnell on Saturday and invited him to lunch, Axios reported. Vice President Mike Pence will also join them, where the conversation is expected to center on tax reform, judicial nominees and disaster aid. How important is tax reform to Republicans? "If we don't [accomplish it], we're dead," Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said on CBS' Face the Nation Sunday, predicting huge losses for the GOP in the House and primaries across the board in the Senate. "It will be the end of Mitch McConnell as we know it."

Former White House strategist Steve Bannon - who has promised to primary every Republican incumbent in the Senate except Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) - taunted McConnell Saturday during a speech at the Value Voters Summit. "Yeah, Mitch, the donors are not happy. They've all left you. We've cut your oxygen off," Bannon said, comparing McConnell to Julius Caesar and calling it a "season of war" against the GOP establishment. Andrew Restuccia with more: <http://politi.co/2gkZGOF>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR OBAMACARE - Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) are expected to unveil a deal this week to stabilize Obamacare markets, just days after Trump roiled the industry by announcing an end to federal subsidies that help cover health care costs for low-income enrollees, the Wall Street Journal reports. Trump talked to Alexander over the weekend and is encouraging him to move ahead with the plan, Graham said on CBS. But Mick Mulvaney, Trump's OMB director, told Burgess, Rachael and Josh on Friday the White House wouldn't agree to a deal to reinstate the subsidies without getting something big in return, like border wall funding.

So what does this all mean? Deciding whether to reinstate the subsidies is likely to be just one more item on Congress' lengthy December to-do list that also includes funding the government and providing protections for Dreamers before the DACA program ends in March, upping the

possibility of a government shutdown. The Washington Post's Paul Kane:
<http://wapo.st/2gnuUEK>

ARE YOU THERE GOP? IT'S ME, THE DEBT - Republicans' tax reform push is calling into question what it means to be a fiscal conservative, particularly in the age of Trump. "Conservatives have long railed against the nation's now-\$20 trillion debt. But now that they're desperate to pass a tax bill, many Republicans' repulsion to red ink is fading fast," Rachael and Burgess report. Many Republicans are now echoing OMB Director Mick Mulvaney - once a prominent House fiscal hawk - by insisting the tax cuts will stimulate the economy and therefore pay for themselves.

Quote du jour: "In order to make good on our campaign tax promise, there probably are going to be some sacrifices made from an ideological perspective," said senior House Budget member Steve Womack (R-Ark.), a longtime deficit hawk.

There are still some deficit hard-liners - like retiring Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) - who say that kind of thinking is irresponsible, point out it has been debunked by several economists and insist tax cuts be paid for. But given that the GOP is desperate to head into the 2018 midterms with a legislative victory, Corker's club appears to be a small one. "In theory, dozens of Republicans in Congress agree with Corker... [multiple members], however, signaled their willingness to vote for a tax package that adds to the deficit if the choice was that or nothing." More:
<http://politi.co/2ys6vVj>

**** A message from the National Confectioners Association - #AlwaysATreat:** Leading global chocolate and candy companies are coming together to provide more information, options, and support as consumers enjoy their favorite treats. It's the first step on our journey to help people manage their sugar intake and ensure that they feel empowered to make informed choices. Learn more at AlwaysATreat.com. **

JUST ANOTHER MANIC MONDAY. OR IS IT? Welcome to Oct. 16 and thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill. Your Huddle host had a wonderful (whirlwind) weekend celebrating turning the big 3-0 with family and friends. Here's to a new decade.

FRIDAY'S MOST CLICKED: The Josh Dawsey-Paul Demko joint about Trump's plans to scrap Obamacare subsidies was the winner to cap off the week.

CRITICAL MOMENT IN MENENDEZ TRIAL - The federal corruption trial against Sen. Bob Menendez resumes today, with lawyers on both sides holding their breath as the judge overseeing the case decides whether to dismiss a big chunk of the worst allegations facing the New Jersey Democrat. Judge William Walls expressed doubts last week about a central argument in the prosecution's case, that Menendez allegedly broke the law by receiving a string of gifts over time from co-defendant Salomon Melgen in exchange for performing political favors. The definition of bribery and the "string of benefits" theory the prosecution's case is based on was impacted by the Supreme Court's decision to overturn former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell's corruption conviction in 2016. Bres and Matt Friedman: <http://politi.co/2yt1Wdq>

SHOWDOWN IN THE SUNSHINE STATE - Democrats are going all in to make sure three-term Sen. Bill Nelson doesn't lose to Rick Scott in an expected faceoff next year. Scott hasn't declared his candidacy but is expected to run and have a sizeable war chest to match - he spent \$86 million of his own fortune for his two gubernatorial campaigns - in a state Trump won last year. Democrats are already targeting Scott as if he's a candidate, airing digital ad buys against the Florida governor. But Democratic leaders are worried about Nelson's lagging fundraising, particularly since Florida is one of the most expensive media markets in the country. Marc Caputo and Edward-Isaac Dovere with more: <http://politi.co/2gmpJ8e>

JUST CAN'T QUIT YA - Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) said when push came to shove, she just couldn't walk away from her role as a leading moderate in the Senate, despite the appeal of running for governor back home. "I just felt that I couldn't walk away even though it's a very difficult and troubled time in Washington," Collins said on MSNBC's "Kasie DC" Sunday night. Collins ended months of speculation on Friday when she announced she would finish out her Senate term, opting not to run for governor next year. The Hill with more: <http://bit.ly/2yoJX5J>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BOB CORKER? Well, for one thing, the retiring senator has a free slice of limoncello pie waiting for him at his favorite Italian spot back home in Chattanooga, a gift of appreciation from the restaurant for confronting Trump. Corker's criticisms of Trump didn't surprise long-time residents of the city, who have watched him move up the ladder for decades, from student body president to business leader to mayor and now senator, all without losing his trademark bluntness. "He's certainly not a grandstander, has never been that," said Jon Kinsey, a Democrat who preceded Corker as mayor. "He is simply saying what he thinks is the truth. That can be alarming." The New York Times' Matt Flegenheimer from Tennessee: <http://nyti.ms/2gkXsyH>

DE LEÓN MAKES IT OFFICIAL - California state Senate leader Kevin de León officially launched his primary challenge against Sen. Dianne Feinstein Sunday. De León did not mention Feinstein in his public campaign roll-out and avoided criticizing her by name in a subsequent interview with our David Siders. Feinstein, the oldest member of the Senate at age 84, announced her reelection campaign last week. Read more: <http://politi.co/2glQIk9>. And watch his announcement video: <http://bit.ly/2glRb5T>

THE RULE THAT BROKE THE SENATE - Republicans hope to use reconciliation to pass a partisan tax code overhaul by the end of the year - the same fast-track budget tool they were relying on to repeal and replace Obamacare. But as it turns out, budget reconciliation was never supposed to be used like this, Jeff Davis writes for POLITICO Magazine. "Once a tool to ease partisan gridlock, reconciliation has become part of the problem, used to reinforce the very problems it was designed to help fix." More: <http://politi.co/2gmq8Ye>

ENGAGED - **Ruth Guerra**, comms director for American Action Network and the Congressional Leadership Fund, this weekend got engaged to **Roy Milan Schultheis**, chief of staff for Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.). The couple met when she was at the RNC. "Roy had a whole day planned starting with spa and pool day at the Montage in Laguna Beach followed by champagne on the beach to watch the sunset where he then got on one knee and popped the

question." **Pic:** <http://bit.ly/2gcmpZz>

TODAY IN CONGRESS - The Senate gavels in at 4 p.m. with one roll call vote on the confirmation of Callista Gingrich to be the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican at 5:30 p.m. **The House** is out until Oct. 23.

AROUND THE HILL - Senate Armed Services ranking member Jack Reed (D-R.I.) holds a press conference about his recent trip to Korea at 2 p.m. in the Senate radio/TV gallery.

FRIDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Aaron Smith first guessed that Sens. Thomas Platt and Roscoe Conkling of New York resigned in protest of President James Garfield's nominee for New York City customs collector, thinking they'd quickly be reelected with more leverage over the president. While Platt was reelected years later, Conkling's political career ended.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - Aaron with today's question: Before Mike Pence became vice president, when is the last time that an Indiana governor joined the president's cabinet, what was the position and who was president? Send your best guess my way: hcaygle@politico.com. The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle.

GET HUDDLE emailed to your phone each morning.

**** A message from the National Confectioners Association - #AlwaysATreat:** We've always created transparent, fun, and great-tasting treats. By 2022, Mars Wrigley Confectionery, Nestlé USA, Ferrero, Lindt, Ghirardelli, Russell Stover, and Ferrara Candy Company will work together to make half of their individually wrapped products available in sizes that contain 200 calories or less per pack. And, 90 percent of the best-selling treats made by these companies will have calorie information printed right on the front of the pack. During the same time period, the newly established AlwaysATreat.com will evolve into a digital resource full of easy-to-use information for consumers to better understand the unique role that chocolate and candy can play in a happy, balanced lifestyle. Learn more at AlwaysATreat.com. **

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/10/16/mcconnell-trump-meet-for-lunch-senate-eyes-critical-budget-vote-this-week-bipartisan-health-care-deal-in-the-works-showdown-in-the-sunshine-state-222810>

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Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pounder
Sent: Mon 5/22/2017 9:26:28 PM
Subject: Updated Proposal...
[5.22.17 Definers EPA Monitoring Proposal.pdf](#)

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder
jpounder@definerscorp.com
571-290-5460

To: Alexander Nazaryan[a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 11/16/2017 8:28:45 PM
Subject: RE:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... “Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA’s criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal

with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Emily Holden
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:27:43 PM
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](#)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Thur 4/19/2018 8:40:12 PM
Subject: Afternoon Energy: FERC braces for comment period — Pruitt probe pileup — NASA head cleared for takeoff

By Garrett Ross and David Beavers | 04/19/2018 04:39 PM EDT

With help from Daniel Lippman, Kelsey Tamborrino, Eric Wolff and Anthony Adragna

SOUND OFF IN THE COMMENTS: As FERC asks the public to weigh in on how to update its procedures for reviewing natural gas pipelines, its commissioners are preparing for a wave of divided responses, Pro's Eric Wolff reports. The pipeline approval process, which was last updated in 1999, has become increasingly contentious in recent years as U.S. gas production surged, raising the need to expand the pipeline network. It has also been marked as one of Chairman Kevin McIntyre's top priorities for the agency.

The request focuses on the criteria FERC uses to determine whether there's a need for a project, the use of eminent domain in siting pipeline projects, evaluation of environmental impacts and improving FERC's efficiency in its certification process. Environmentalists have expressed concern about climate change and land rights' advocates over the use of eminent domain.

The questions included are not meant to be read as a "forecast" of future policy, nor criticism of current policy, McIntyre emphasized. "I have an open mind on the issues," he said. Other commissioners raised questions about whether the agency should review pipelines on a regional basis, and that "companies not consumers" should bear costs for their development. Read more from Eric [here](#).

REMOVING BARRIERS TO BATTERIES: At today's meeting, FERC also unanimously approved a rule that changes how regional transmission organizations study and approve generator interconnection requests in an effort to speed up the process and winnow out projects with little chance of actually getting built. The new rule makes it easier for batteries to be installed on existing generation sites and link up to the grid, and explicitly adds batteries to the list of possible power providers. It also requires transmission providers to list their study processes, create a more accessible dispute resolution process, and allow generators to update their technology without having to go to the end of the line.

Welcome to Afternoon Energy! We're your hosts Garrett Ross and David Beavers. Send suggestions, news and tips to gross@politico.com, dbeavers@politico.com, mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at [@garrett_ross](https://twitter.com/garrett_ross), [@davidabeavers](https://twitter.com/davidabeavers), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

POLITICO Space is our new weekly briefing on the policies and personalities shaping the second space age. [Sign up](#) today.

PRUITT PROBE PILEUP: The EPA inspector general will open yet another investigation into EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. This time, it's over his use of a security detail for personal trips to Disneyland, the Rose Bowl and some college basketball games, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (D-R.I.) last month asked the inspector general to probe whether it was proper for Pruitt's round-the-clock security detail to accompany him on the trips. EPA IG Arthur Elkins Jr. wrote that his staff had "determined that the issues raised in your letter are within the authority of the OIG to review, and we will do so," according to a [copy of the letter](#) provided by Whitehouse's office. It is at least the fifth known IG probe of Pruitt. More from Alex [here](#).

HEARING DOUBLE-HEADER: Pruitt is in for a long day next week, as the House Appropriations Interior and Environment Subcommittee announced that the EPA administrator will [appear for testimony](#) on Thursday. It will be his second scheduled hearing that day, following a morning appearance at the House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee. Both panels are expected to dig into the plethora of ethical questions that have dogged Pruitt in recent weeks, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports. The announcement follows a letter from four senior E&C Democrats calling for Pruitt to be placed under oath. Read more from Anthony [here](#).

— **Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#)** also said today that the Appropriations panel that oversees EPA spending, of which she is chairwoman, is in the process of locking down "a date for Pruitt to testify, hopefully the week of May 7. More [here](#).

CUMMINGS PRAISES OMB'S PRUITT PROBE: Revelations OMB will [look into Pruitt's improper spending](#) on a privacy booth is music to the ears of House Oversight ranking member [Elijah Cummings](#), though he's anxious for his Republican colleagues to step up their game. "It's great that someone over there is finally going to start looking into this, but my goodness, what does it take to get their attention?" he said in a statement to POLITICO. "Why haven't they been investigating this for months? It's obvious that Congress needs to step up and start conducting real, credible oversight instead of allowing the Trump Administration to avoid all accountability." His Oversight colleague, Rep. [Trey Gowdy](#), is in the process of [trying to schedule](#) five senior EPA aides for interviews on Pruitt's behavior.

VIP STATUS: Pruitt landed a spot on TIME's annual list of the 100 [most influential people](#), out today, though his entry is less than flattering. Christine Todd Whitman, EPA chief under former President George W. Bush, writes of Pruitt: "If his actions continue in the same direction, during Pruitt's term at the EPA the environment will be threatened instead of protected, and human health endangered instead of preserved, all with no long-term benefit to the economy." Somehow, your AE hosts failed to make the list again this year.

NASA HEAD CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF: The Senate approved Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#) to become the new NASA administrator in a razor-thin 50-49 vote today, Anthony [reports](#).

DRILL, BABY, DRILL: Interior will start an environmental review for possible oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, according to a document to be published Friday in the Federal Register, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). Congress last year directed Interior to hold at least two lease sales in the region by the end of 2024, a major legislative victory Murkowski

scored as part of tax bill negotiations. The Bureau of Land Management will hold five public meetings throughout Alaska to solicit public comment on the environmental review.

MAIL TIME: A group of more than 70 local governments, community development groups and labor unions — organized by the BlueGreen Alliance and the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center — sent a letter today to House and Senate appropriators calling on Congress to fully fund programs that invest in communities most impacted by the loss of coal jobs. The letter, sent to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders, specifically cites the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER Initiative and the Economic Development Administration, the latter of which would be gutted in the president's fiscal 2019 budget request. Read the letter [here](#).

SWAMP WATCH: In a pair of lobbying registrations that caught our eye today, Marathon Oil hired Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting to lobby on domestic oil and gas production and Honeywell hired Alpine Group to lobby on "potential changes to one national standard for Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) credits," per the registration. Alpine's Rhod Shaw, a former chief of staff to Sen. [Sherrod Brown](#) (D-Ohio), and Mike Henry will lobby for Honeywell.

SPOTTED at Tuesday's POLITICO Live event on the future of renewable energy sponsored by Anheuser-Busch at the Liaison Hotel: Bryan DeAngelis of Kivvit; Ramsey Cox of the Beer Institute; Gil Jenkins of ACORE; Matt Mullin, president and CEO of High Street Strategies; Patrick O'Neill of Public Strategies Washington; Bree Raum of the American Gas Association; Dylan Reed of Advanced Energy Economy; Rory Stanley from Senate Energy and Natural Resources; Eric Williams and Christine Csizmadia of NEI; and David Kamenetzky, Tony Milikin, Cesar Vargas, Doug Bailey, Gemma Hart, Dave Taylor and Ingrid de Ryck of Anheuser-Busch. Anheuser-Busch announced sustainability commitments at the event, including its intent to purchase 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

QUICK HITS:

— Pruitt's Capitol Hill condo fallout hits a Republican senator, [Bloomberg](#).

— Lyft to offset emissions from rides with projects combating climate change, [Reuters](#).

— Cutting Oil Output Worked, but Will Saudi Arabia, Russia Do It Again? [The Wall Street Journal](#).

— Damage to Great Barrier Reef From Global Warming Is Irreversible, Scientists Say, [The New York Times](#).

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

— LGBT rights group [takes aim](#) at Pence as Trump woes deepen

— Democrats [crush House Republicans](#) in fundraising

— Trump allies worry Cohen will flip

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/afternoon-energy/2018/04/ferc-braces-for-comment-period-177343>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

FERC opens comment period on gas pipeline approvals [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 04/19/2018 12:09 PM EDT

FERC said today it's seeking public input on how to update its procedures for reviewing natural gas pipelines.

The Notice of Inquiry approved unanimously at the monthly meeting advances a core priority of Chairman Kevin McIntyre: updating the 1999 procedures that are still used to certifying new pipelines.

FERC's request focuses on gathering comments on the criteria it uses to determine whether there's a need for a project, the use of eminent domain in siting pipeline projects, evaluation of environmental impacts and improving FERC's efficiency in its certification process. The comment period will run for 60 days from its publication date in the Federal Register.

The pipeline approval process has become increasingly contentious in recent years as U.S. gas production surged, raising the need to expand the pipeline network. That has triggered opposition from environmentalists who are concerned about climate change and land rights' advocates over the use of eminent domain.

McIntyre emphasized that the questions in the NOI should not be read as a "forecast" of future policy, nor as criticism of the current policy.

"I have an open mind on the issues," he said.

The commissioners expressed different priorities for any new review process. Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur raised questions about whether the agency should review pipelines on a regional basis, while Commissioner Neil Chatterjee emphasized that "companies not consumers" should bear costs for their development.

Commissioner Robert Powelson foreshadowed the potentially divisiveness of the issue. "I appreciate Chairman McIntyre's leadership on this," he said. "You are a brave soul, my friend."

To view online [click here](#).

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EPA watchdog to review Pruitt's use of security detail on personal trips [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 04/19/2018 02:28 PM EDT

EPA's inspector general will review Administrator Scott Pruitt's use of his security detail on personal trips, according to Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (D-R.I.), who requested the inquiry.

Whitehouse last month asked the IG to probe whether it was proper for Pruitt's round-the-clock security detail to accompany him on trips to Disneyland, the Rose Bowl and some college basketball games.

In a response to Whitehouse's request, EPA IG Arthur Elkins, Jr. wrote that the IG staff had "determined that the issues raised in your letter are within the authority of the OIG to review, and we will do so," according to a [copy of the letter](#) provided by the senator's office.

This new review may also touch on other issues raised by Whitehouse, according to Elkins' letter, including an allegation that Pruitt "requested per diem lodging expenses in excess of the federal government's established daily rate."

Whitehouse did not release his original request letter publicly, citing sensitive security information included in the document.

Elkins added that the review will be conducted separately from the ongoing broader audit on Pruitt's travel in order to avoid delays in completing that review.

This is at least the fifth known IG probe of Pruitt specifically. Aside from his travel spending and justification, the IG is also reviewing the installation of his private phone booth, his \$50-a-night condo rental and his use of a special hiring authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

WHAT'S NEXT: It is unclear how long this new review will take.

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Pruitt sets another congressional hearing for next week [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 04/19/2018 11:22 AM EDT

A second congressional panel has announced it will hold [hearing](#) with Scott Pruitt next week, setting the embattled EPA administrator up for a long day of questioning by lawmakers over his ethics issues and heavy spending.

The House Appropriations Interior and Environment Subcommittee said Pruitt will testify on

April 26 at 2 p.m. That will follow his appearance at the House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee in the morning, according to a committee spokeswoman.

The new hearing comes as four senior E&C Democrats sent [a letter](#) to Chairman [Greg Walden](#) (R-Ore.) and Environment Subcommittee Chairman [John Shimkus](#) (R-Ill.) calling for Pruitt to testify under oath.

"Mr. Pruitt's extraordinary lack of responsiveness to Congressional inquiries, legal violations resulting from EPA's failure to notify Congress about his expenditures, and serious questions about the veracity of his statements regarding a number of these ethics issues make this request necessary," Reps. [Frank Pallone](#) (N.J.), [Diana DeGette](#) (Colo.), [Paul Tonko](#) (N.Y.) and [Kathy Castor](#) (Fla.) wrote.

The Democrats also requested the hearing be expanded to include the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

An E&C spokesman was not immediately available to comment on the request.

To view online [click here](#).

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Murkowski eyes week of May 7 for Pruitt hearing [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 04/19/2018 03:05 PM EDT

Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska), chairwoman of the Appropriations panel that oversees EPA spending, said she's in the process of scheduling a hearing with embattled EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for the week of May 7.

"We're not going to have anything next week, but right after we get back we're going to be busy," she said. The Senate is [due to be on recess](#) the week of April 30.

Pruitt is scheduled to testify before two House panels next Thursday, but has not testified in the Senate since a late January hearing with the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Asked what topics she plans to put to Pruitt, Murkowski said: "There may be a lot more things to ask him than we even have on the table now."

WHAT'S NEXT: Murkowski said her Appropriations subcommittee is "in the process of locking down" a date for Pruitt's appearance.

To view online [click here](#).

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Mulvaney, House panel ramp up pressure on Pruitt [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 04/18/2018 12:36 PM EDT

Scrutiny of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's spending and ethics issues grew Wednesday, with White House budget director Mick Mulvaney telling lawmakers he would probe Pruitt's activities and a leading House Republican revealing his committee was pressing the agency for answers.

Mulvaney's remarks that he was looking into Pruitt's purchase of a \$43,000 privacy booth and the comments by House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden are adding to Pruitt's woes as the inquiries into his spending habits multiply.

Criticism of Pruitt's expenses for expanding and upgrading his personal security, heavy spending on first-class airfare and controversial pay hikes for close aides is now spreading to Republicans, who until recently had dismissed the issue as a series of political attacks from Democrats and environmentalists who oppose his rollback of the Obama administration's policies.

"I'm not interested in covering for anybody else," Mulvaney told the House Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee. "I'm not any happier about it than you are."

Mulvaney's comments came two days after the Government Accountability Office [found EPA violated the Antideficiency Act](#) by failing to notify Congress about the cost of the secure phone booth. Federal law mandates agencies notify congressional appropriators if they intend to spend over \$5,000 on office furnishings.

"We will investigate them," Mulvaney added.

EPA has acknowledged it had not notified Congress about the purchase, but defended the move. "EPA disagrees with GAO's legal conclusion that this expenditure also required notice to Congress, but we are addressing GAO's concern with regard to congressional notification," spokesman Jahan Wilcox said.

In addition to that White House probe, House Oversight Chairman Trey Gowdy has asked for five EPA aides to testify about the recent issues at the agency, and over the weekend he appeared to dismiss Pruitt's claims that threats to his security required him to fly first or business class. EPA's inspector general is also conducting four separate investigations into Pruitt and his top staffers.

Walden, whose committee is scheduled to hold a hearing with Pruitt next week over EPA's budget, told reporters Wednesday that the panel has been seeking information around Pruitt's ethics questions and spending.

"Let me assure you we have been in contact with the EPA at various levels and [in various] ways

to acquire information about the allegations," he said. So far, none of those requests has been made public, and a committee spokesman was not immediately available to comment.

Still, Republicans appeared divided about how intensely their party should be investigating the embattled EPA chief. Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso, an ardent Pruitt supporter, this week raised questions about Pruitt's use of multiple official email accounts but backed away from the notion of holding hearings on the EPA chief.

Still other GOP lawmakers appeared fed up at having to answer questions about Pruitt's behavior and welcomed the probes.

"We need to look at this," Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) told POLITICO. "There shouldn't be a reason why we shouldn't look at this."

Senate Environment and Public Works ranking member Tom Carper called the Republican-led oversight efforts "encouraging."

"In private conversations that I've had with my GOP colleagues, there is not just disappointment with Mr. Pruitt on any number of levels but disdain. I think they'll find their voices — maybe sooner rather than later," Carper said.

Democrats tried to keep up the pressure, with 170 lawmakers signing on to a resolution calling for Pruitt's ouster — echoing a [call from](#) The New York Times editorial board on Wednesday.

"We really feel we've got a lot of good momentum," Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.), lead sponsor of the resolution, said. "People are outraged by the way this guy has behaved."

To view online [click here](#).

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Gowdy expands probe into EPA's Pruitt [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna and Alex Guillén | 04/13/2018 05:45 PM EDT

House Oversight Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) said Friday he's expanding his probe into the alleged ethical and spending abuses by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt one day after his staff met for several hours with a former EPA aide who was pushed out of the agency.

Gowdy's latest [letter](#) is a further sign of the deepening bipartisan scrutiny facing President Donald Trump's environmental chief, whose critics accuse him of excessive spending on travel, vehicles, staff raises and luxe security features such as a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth.

The committee's new request focuses on the decision to increase Pruitt's security to round-the-clock protection, contracts to sweep Pruitt's office for electronic surveillance, his trips to Italy

and Morocco, the hiring of an Italian security firm, and travel by Pruitt's security chief, Pasquale "Nino" Perrotta.

The letter comes after the committee interviewed ousted EPA employee and former Trump campaign aide Kevin Chmielewski, who is being treated as a whistleblower. A committee spokeswoman said the information he provided is consistent with allegations laid out in [a letter](#) released Thursday by House and Senate Democrats who had also spoken to him.

The committee also asked for sit-down interviews with four senior EPA officials: Perrotta; Ryan Jackson, Pruitt's chief of staff; Millan Hupp, a scheduling and advance aide; and Sarah Greenwalt, a senior counsel to Pruitt. Gowdy requested the agency schedule those interviews and provide a litany of documents by April 27. Gowdy also requested an on-the-record interview with Chmielewski, who spoke more informally with lawmakers this week.

Hupp and Greenwalt, both of whom have worked for Pruitt since he was Oklahoma's attorney general, are the two staffers who received raises via a special authority granted Pruitt under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Pruitt told Fox News last week he was not aware of the raises, although Chmielewski told Democrats this week that the raises were "100 percent Pruitt himself."

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the agency had "responded to Chairman Gowdy's inquiries and we will continue to work with him."

EPA's inspector general is also investigating complaints about Pruitt's travel spending and other practices. The inspector general's office said it will release an interim report Monday afternoon on one of its probes, which involves whether Pruitt misused special hiring authority provided by the Safe Drinking Water Act to bring some key aides into the agency.

It's unclear whether the IG has expanded that probe to include a recent controversy around EPA's use of the same water law to grant raises to the two Pruitt aides despite the White House's disapproval.

Chmielewski told Democrats this week that EPA fired him after he refused to sign off retroactively on first-class travel for one of Pruitt's closest aides, Samantha Dravis. Gowdy's letter does not request an interview with Dravis, who has announced her intent to leave the agency.

During congressional interviews earlier this week, Chmielewski [outlined](#) a detailed litany of seemingly unethical behavior against Pruitt. He said the EPA chief insisted on staying at expensive hotels while traveling even if they exceeded permissible federal spending limits, directed staff to book him on Delta Air Lines so he could accrue frequent flier miles, made a close aide "act as a personal real estate representative" and then retaliated against staff who questioned his behavior, among other allegations.

EPA has [previously dismissed](#) Chmielewski as one of a "group of disgruntled employees who have either been dismissed or reassigned." The agency did not immediately comment on the

latest letter.

Gowdy's probe into Pruitt's activities has been in contrast to his GOP colleagues, who have adopted a "wait and see" approach toward the EPA chief's ethical woes. Lawmakers this week expressed discomfort with Pruitt's spending when asked and vowed to press him about it at future hearings. But they've stopped short of demanding documents or issuing subpoenas to investigate the alleged ethics lapses.

Pruitt last appeared before Congress in late January before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Unlike his fellow Cabinet members, he has yet to appear before any congressional committees to defend his fiscal 2019 budget request. And he's not scheduled to return to Capitol Hill for another two weeks, when he is scheduled to attend an April 26 session with the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

"The Republicans are absolving themselves of all oversight responsibility even in the face of the most egregious conduct. They may as well stop calling committees oversight," Melanie Sloan, senior adviser at American Oversight, told POLITICO. "What would it take? Would he literally have to kill somebody before they say it's a problem?"

GOP lawmakers were less patient with Obama EPA officials. Senate and House lawmakers questioned former Administrators Lisa Jackson and Gina McCarthy, as well as other senior brass, on issues ranging from the use of nonofficial email accounts, whether they used texting to avoid record-keeping requirements, whether they allowed a senior staffer to commit time fraud and why they hadn't fired employees who spent hours watching pornography at work more quickly.

EPW Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) has said he planned to await the results of a White House review of Pruitt's conduct and would not comment on multiple occasions this week on when the administrator would return to his committee.

"He was just here earlier this year and answered questions for 2½ hours, but I expect him to come back again," Barrasso told reporters.

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Trump friends and foes headline TIME 100 [Back](#)

By Cristiano Lima | 04/19/2018 10:47 AM EDT

President Donald Trump and some of his closest allies, from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to Fox News host Sean Hannity, headlined Time magazine's 2018 list of the world's most influential people — as did several of the president's biggest political detractors.

The yearly listing, which chronicles the world's "most influential pioneers, leaders, titans, artists and icons" debuted Thursday morning, naming various world leaders with whom the president has become cozy — Presidents Emmanuel Macron of France, Xi Jinping of China and Moon Jae-in of South Korea.

Among those selected were also members of the president's administration and some of his most vocal public defenders. The list included the embattled Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Hannity, whose tie to a Trump-connected lawyer has drawn scrutiny in recent days.

But the magazine also featured various figures who have sharply criticized the president or stand poised to inflict political damage against him. Among them are House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, San Juan (Puerto Rico) Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, London Mayor Sadiq Khan, comedians Trevor Noah and Jimmy Kimmel, and special counsel Robert Mueller, who continues to probe ties between Trump's campaign and Russian officials in 2016.

In an entry authored by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), once a critic of Trump as a candidate, the lawmaker describes the president as "a flash-bang grenade thrown into Washington by the forgotten men and women of America." Cruz writes that "President Trump is doing what he was elected to do: disrupt the status quo," adding that the confusion he creates in Washington is "great fun to watch."

Other entries, though, appeared to indirectly take aim at the president.

In a piece on the special counsel, former U.S. attorney Preet Bharara notes that "Robert S. Mueller III doesn't seek deferments," an oblique reference to Trump's multiple draft deferments that kept him out of the Vietnam War. Bharara was fired from the Trump administration last March.

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg writes that Khan, the British official who has called out Trump's leadership and rhetoric on immigration, "rightfully denounced" the U.S. president when he retweeted anti-Muslims videos from a far-right political group.

In the entry on Carmen Yulín Cruz, a harsh critic of the Trump administration's response to natural disasters in Puerto Rico, the San Juan mayor is described as the "voice of the disenfranchised citizens" who could not vote in the 2016 presidential election.

Others named to the list had their influence directly linked to their proximity to the president.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich writes in his piece on Hannity that one of the host's "biggest fans is President Donald Trump, who routinely watches the TV show and talks with Sean as a fellow New Yorker." Gingrich adds that "Hannity played a major role in helping Trump get the [Republican presidential] nomination and win the general election" through his prominent perch at Fox News.

Hannity became the subject of scrutiny this week after he was named in court as a client of

Michael Cohen, an attorney who is the president's longtime associate.

Several of the student survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting in Parkland, Florida, were also selected by the magazine for their advocacy for increased gun-control measures.

Former President Barack Obama in an article for Time lauded the students for urging U.S. leaders to step up their efforts to combat gun violence, writing that "our children are calling us to account" on the issue.

"The Parkland, Fla., students don't have the kind of lobbyists or big budgets for attack ads that their opponents do. Most of them can't even vote yet," Obama writes. "But they have the power so often inherent in youth: to see the world anew; to reject the old constraints, outdated conventions and cowardice too often dressed up as wisdom. The power to insist that America can be better."

The students — Cameron Kasky, Jaclyn Corin, David Hogg, Emma Gonzalez and Alex Wind — have risen to prominence as staunch advocates of gun-control reform. Several have been deeply critical of Trump's response to the shooting, which left 17 people dead and numerous others injured.

To view online [click here](#).

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Bridenstine wins Senate approval as NASA chief [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 04/19/2018 02:45 PM EDT

The sharply divided Senate today narrowly approved Rep. [Jim Bridenstine](#) as the new NASA administrator, putting the Oklahoma Republican who has questioned climate change science and [criticized research](#) into it in charge on one of the nation's most important research centers.

The final vote was 50-49. Sen. [John McCain](#) (R-Ariz.) did not vote.

Bridenstine sought to moderate some of his positions on climate change during the confirmation process. Pressed on his views by Sen. [Brian Schatz](#) (D-Hawaii) during a November hearing, he stopped short of acknowledging of the scientific consensus that human activity is driving climate change but said he believe there was some impact.

"Human activity absolutely is a contributor to the climate change that we are currently seeing," Bridenstine said at the hearing. "I think right now we're just scratching the surface as to the entire system of the Earth."

He also voiced continued support of the agency's Earth science research efforts in [responses](#) to questions and promised he would not punish scientists for conducting research into climate

change.

But Democrats and environmental groups vehemently opposed his selection, citing his lack of scientific background and arguing he's too partisan to effectively lead the space agency.

To view online [click here](#).

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Interior to start environmental review for ANWR drilling lease sales [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 04/19/2018 10:51 AM EDT

The Interior Department will start conducting an environmental review for possible oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, according to a [document](#) to be published Friday in the Federal Register.

The review kicks off the official process in what could eventually lead to oil and gas drilling in a 1.6 million-acre section of ANWR. Congress last year directed Interior to hold at least two oil and gas lease sales in the region by the end of 2024.

Interior's Bureau of Land Management will hold five public meetings throughout Alaska to solicit public comment on the environmental review.

WHAT'S NEXT: Interior will accept public comments on the review for 60 days after the notice runs in the federal register.

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LGBT rights group takes aim at Pence as Trump woes deepen [Back](#)

By Matthew Nussbaum | 04/19/2018 05:02 AM EDT

A leading progressive group is launching a campaign-style effort to paint Vice President Mike Pence as an extremist who wields unprecedented power in the White House — an early sign that as the vice president takes a lead role in midterm campaigning, he also risks making himself a target.

The Human Rights Campaign, a leading LGBT rights organization, is launching a sustained attack against Pence, with a [website](#), videos and a lengthy report to be released on Thursday. The materials were shown to POLITICO early.

The attack from a key player in the Democratic base comes as Pence is campaigning heavily for Republicans ahead of the 2018 midterms. And as President Donald Trump's legal troubles expand, from the special counsel probe to a federal investigation of his personal attorney, some Democrats are beginning to train their fire on Pence in case the president doesn't run for reelection in 2020 or gets removed from office.

"Mike Pence has made a career out of attacking the rights and equal dignity of LGBTQ people, women and other marginalized communities," Chad Griffin, the president of HRC, said in a statement. "Now as vice president, he poses one of the greatest threats to equality in the history of our movement. With the world distracted by Donald Trump's scandal-ridden White House, Mike Pence's nefarious agenda has been allowed to fly under the radar for too long. He has become not only the most powerful vice president in American history, but also the least scrutinized."

"This is just another politically motivated attack on the VP by a left-wing organization closely aligned with the Democratic Party," said Pence press secretary Alyssa Farah.

Internally, the Vice President's office was largely dismissive of the campaign.

The broadside comes as Pence has taken on an outside role in the Republicans' work to prevent a Democratic wave in 2018. In the next week and a half, Pence will be making campaign stops in North Carolina, Wisconsin, Indiana and California. Those trips come after Pence has already crisscrossed the country stumping and fundraising for Republicans.

As Pence becomes a more visible part of the administration, Democrats have another incentive to lash out at him: cash.

"I think the most likely thing here is that Pence is an easy target for the Human Rights Campaign to raise money from," said Republican strategist Rick Tyler, who served as communications director for Sen. Ted Cruz's presidential run. "Every special interest group, and Human Rights Campaign is not alone, has a boogeyman, and theirs is Mike Pence."

The HRC effort highlights what it describes as Pence's "extremist ideology": his opposition while in Congress to Employment Non-Discrimination Act protections for sexual orientation; his opposition to ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," which barred openly gay people from serving in the military; his opposition to hate crime protections for transgender individuals; and a statement on his 2000 campaign website that appeared to endorse federal funding for the controversial practice of "conversion therapy."

The report, which highlights these positions, also hits Pence for his handling of an HIV/AIDS outbreak in Indiana during his governorship and for signing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which critics said would legalize discrimination against LGBT people and which nearly derailed his governorship.

Along with the report, HRC produced a series of videos, including one in which Pence decries the use of condoms and another in which he lobbies against hate-crime legislation. The videos

feature ominous background music and black-and-white images of a malevolent-looking Pence. Clips of Pence speaking on the floor of the House — including one in which he says, "Abstinence and marital faithfulness before condom distribution are the cure for what ails the families of Africa" — are spliced in.

Pence is one of the more popular members of the administration, said HRC's Charlotte Clymer, who helped draft the report, adding that Pence has received "less scrutiny" than other White House figures.

"We've seen Mike Pence fly underneath the radar," said Chris Sgro, HRC's communications director. "The unfortunate reality is that Mike Pence has tried to hold himself out there as the moderate, grown-up voice in the room. But we know, and this report exposes, that he's anything but. He is a dangerous extremist."

Tyler said even if HRC and other groups beat up on Pence as November approaches, he believes voters are more likely to make ballot-box decisions based on their views of Trump.

"When [House Speaker Paul] Ryan announced he wasn't running for reelection, that was in many ways the end of the Republican Party the way I knew it and the way Ryan knew it," Tyler said. "The cord is severed, this is now Trump's party, for better or worse, for good or bad, and 2018 is now a referendum on his party."

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Democrats crush House Republicans in fundraising [Back](#)

By Elena Schneider | 04/19/2018 05:28 AM EDT

House Republicans told themselves 2018 would be better after getting swamped by Democratic cash in 2017. But Republican incumbents are actually in worse financial shape now than at the end of last year.

A whopping 43 House Republicans raised less money than Democratic challengers in the first three months of 2018 — nearly the same number of stragglers the GOP had at the end of last year, according to POLITICO's analysis of the latest Federal Election Commission filings. An overlapping group of 16 Republican incumbents already have less cash on hand than Democratic challengers, up from the end of 2017, despite hopes that tax reform would open more donor wallets.

The fundraising totals are just the latest indicator of a November nightmare developing for Republicans: a toxic stew of poor presidential popularity, intense Democratic enthusiasm, and a chunk of incumbents whose FEC disclosures show they don't understand how much trouble they could be in for in this political environment.

"The members who are getting outraised at this stage of the election cycle are the ones who present the biggest risk to the Republican majority," said Ken Spain, a Republican consultant who served as the National Republican Congressional Committee's communications director in 2010. "Fundraising is an outgrowth of intensity, so I think this tells you that Republicans are clearly swimming upstream in a challenging election cycle."

The outraised incumbents include some of the most vulnerable Republicans in the country, like Reps. Dana Rohrabacher in California, Jason Lewis in Minnesota and Rod Blum in Iowa. But they also include Republicans who may not have expected to face tough races a year ago but have suddenly found themselves facing energetic and well-financed opponents, like the North Carolina duo of Robert Pittenger and Ted Budd.

It's a mirror image of this time in 2010, seven months before Republicans picked up 63 House seats during President Barack Obama's first term. At this point in the 2010 election cycle, 35 Democratic incumbents were outraised by Republican challengers, and more than a third lost their races in November.

Some incumbents "still haven't gotten the memo," said Chris LaCivita, a Republican strategist. "Members, sometimes, get lost in this perception that everyone in the district knows how great they're doing. And then they're surprised on Election Day when they lose."

And for some, it might be too late to turn things around: "Key decisions are being made right now on where money will be spent this cycle, and I'd be pretty worried if I were one of these members," said one top Republican strategist, granted anonymity to discuss party strategy. "Some people just can't be saved."

The Congressional Leadership Fund — the super PAC aligned with House Speaker Paul Ryan — this week announced plans to spend \$38 million on TV ads across 20 districts this fall. But the first round of reservations skipped over almost all of the battleground races featuring Republican incumbents who have already fallen behind opponents in cash, like Rohrabacher and Virginia Rep. Tom Garrett.

"It's inexcusable for an incumbent to be outraised," said Corry Bliss, executive director of the Congressional Leadership Fund. "We're not investing in any more Rick Saccones" — the GOP's Pennsylvania special election nominee, who was widely outraised by Democratic victor Conor Lamb.

CLF, which raised a record-breaking \$66 million in 2017, and the NRCC will be able to shore up vulnerable Republicans with their own strong fundraising. But helping struggling members "takes away from offensive opportunities," LaCivita said.

"Over the years, too many members have gotten increasingly reliant on third parties and outside groups to save them, and less dependent on themselves, and that's a problem," he added.

Party officials acknowledged that an energized Democratic base topped some Republican

incumbents, but pointed out that some members outraised by opponents are in districts far from battleground territory, like Iowa Rep. Pete King and Texas Rep. Brian Babin, where President Trump won by 47 points in 2016.

The Republicans also stressed that Democrats will be forced to spend money on bruising primaries, leaving them "broke, battered and unelectable in national Democrats' most sought after races," said NRCC spokesman Jesse Hunt.

The generic ballot has also recently narrowed, which Republicans credit to passing tax reform late last year and a strong economic environment. A Washington Post/ABC News poll found Democrats' edge narrowed to 4 points, dropping by half since January.

But tax reform, which Republicans hoped would boost fundraising this quarter and get more incumbents back on level terms with challengers, hasn't necessarily transformed into extra cash for candidates.

"It was as an excuse for [last quarter], but that only worked then, and now we're running out of excuses," said Glen Bolger, a Republican pollster.

Former New York Rep. Thomas Reynolds, who led the NRCC from 2002 to 2006, said tax reform hasn't "reached the candidate-level fundraising. But I'm sure it has at the RNC, at the NRCC and at other outside groups."

"Republicans need to stay focused on selling their biggest accomplishment, which will help the overall atmospherics for them," Reynolds said.

Plenty of Republican incumbents running in perennial battleground seats continue to post strong fundraising. Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) and Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) both raised nearly \$1 million in districts that Hillary Clinton won handily in 2016.

"When I was the political director at the RNC in 2006, our incumbents in the toughest districts survived," said Mike DuHaime, a Republican consultant based in New Jersey. "It was the second- and third-tier members who got swept away because they waited too long."

And many Republicans, elected in conservative waves in 2010 and 2014, are running into political headwinds for the first time.

"This is a good jolt to these incumbents that they have to raise more money because they're in the races of their lives," Bolger said. "A lot of Republicans in Congress haven't seen this kind of political environment. But if they think they can run the same campaigns as they've done before, they'll find out soon that's not the case."

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Trump allies worry Cohen will flip [Back](#)

By Darren Samuelsohn and Andrew Restuccia | 04/18/2018 09:27 PM EDT

President Donald Trump and his outside advisers are increasingly worried that his longtime personal attorney might be susceptible to cooperating with federal prosecutors.

Two sources close to the president said people in Trump's inner circle have in recent days been actively discussing the possibility that Michael Cohen — long seen as one of Trump's most loyal personal allies — might flip if he faces serious charges as a result of his work on behalf of Trump.

"That's what they'll threaten him with: life imprisonment," said Alan Dershowitz, the liberal lawyer and frequent Trump defender who met with the president and his staff over two days at the White House last week. "They're going to threaten him with a long prison term and try to turn him into a canary that sings."

FBI agents overseen by federal prosecutors in New York last week raided Cohen's office and apartment, as well as a hotel room he'd been using. The Trump lawyer is a figure in the ongoing Russia investigation overseen by special counsel Robert Mueller in Washington, but Manhattan-based government attorneys said in court that he is also under separate investigation for his business dealings.

Cohen, who has not been publicly charged with any crimes, owns New York City taxi medallions. He has also been deeply involved in the \$130,000 payment made to adult film actress Stormy Daniels, who has accused Trump of trying to cover up an affair she says the two had in 2006.

In an [interview](#) with CNN last week, Cohen called the raid "unsettling to say the least." But he also said in the same interview that the federal agents were "extremely professional, courteous and respectful" — a dramatic departure from his usual combative style.

Those comments raised eyebrows among some in Trump's inner circle, who noted that one of the president's most ferocious attack dogs seemed unusually taciturn.

"When anybody is faced with spending a long time in jail, they start to re-evaluate their priorities, and cooperation can't be ruled out," said one Trump ally who knows Cohen.

Since the raid, the president and his advisers have been singularly focused on the risk of a potential federal prosecution of Cohen, which they view as a much bigger existential threat to the presidency than former FBI Director James Comey, whose book "A Higher Loyalty" has dominated headlines and even Trump's Twitter feed even before its Tuesday release.

Trump has regularly ranted to friends and advisers about the investigation into Cohen, according to two other people familiar with the conversations. He believes strongly that the FBI raid has

pushed the boundaries of attorney-client privilege, telling friends that he and his associates are being unfairly targeted.

"He's not happy about it," said one White House official.

The White House appears to be creating some distance from Cohen. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters earlier this week that though Trump and Cohen have "still got some ongoing things," the president "has a large number of attorneys, as you know."

Trump said Wednesday during a press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he wants the Mueller investigation "over with, done with." He added that his administration is "giving tremendous amounts of paper" to investigators.

A White House spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment.

In a court filing last week, the acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York explained the FBI raid was "the result of a months-long investigation" into the president's lawyer and that prosecutors were looking for evidence of crimes related to his business dealings.

Trump and his allies fear that documents and recordings that the FBI swept up from Cohen's home and office could come back to haunt the president, whose lawyers have joined Cohen's in New York in asserting attorney-client privilege and are asking a federal judge to approve an independent review of the material.

"Who knows what Cohen has in those files," said a person close to the White House.

But their concerns go beyond Cohen's voluminous files. Increasingly, Trump's outside advisers are worried about the risk posed by Cohen himself.

"I think for two years or four years or five years, Michael Cohen would be a stand-up guy. I think he'd tell them go piss up a rope. But depending on dollars involved, which can be a big driver, or if they look at him and say it's not two to four years, it's 18 to 22, then how loyal is he?" said one defense lawyer who represents a senior Trump aide in Mueller's Russia investigation.

"Is he two years loyal? Is he 10 years loyal? Is he 15 years loyal?" the attorney added. "That's the currency. It's not measured in inches. It's measured in years."

Jay Goldberg, a longtime Trump lawyer, told The Wall Street Journal that he spoke with Trump on Friday about Cohen and warned the president against trusting Cohen if he is facing criminal charges. Goldberg said he warned the president that Cohen "isn't even a 1" on a scale of 1 to 100, where 100 was remaining fully loyal to the president, the newspaper reported.

But others in Trump's circle believe Cohen will remain loyal to the president, pointing to Cohen's long, well-documented history of publicly defending the president, whether in business or politics.

"I'm the guy who would take a bullet for the president," Cohen told Vanity Fair in an interview last summer. Cohen tweeted earlier this month that he will "always protect" Trump.

Appearing on MSNBC on Wednesday, former Trump White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci said Cohen was not a risk to turn on Trump. "If you said to me and I had to flip a coin, is he going to turn on President Trump or turn on other people? I would say adamantly no," he said.

Cohen and Trump's relationship dates back a dozen years. He was one of the earliest backers of the president's political ambitions, and during the 2016 campaign served as a prominent adviser and spokesman, despite disagreements with others on the campaign.

The two men reportedly had dinner together last month at the president's Mar-a-Lago retreat in South Florida. They also spoke by phone last Friday as their lawyers were working together to try to shield materials seized in the FBI raid.

The fallout from the FBI raid continued Wednesday for Cohen, who dropped two much-publicized libel lawsuits against BuzzFeed and the private investigation firm Fusion GPS over publication of the so-called dossier detailing alleged ties between Trump and Russia.

Cohen's attorney, David Schwartz, told the court the voluntary decision to drop the lawsuits was needed "given the events that have unfolded, and the time, attention, and resources needed to prosecute these matters, we have dismissed the matters, despite their merits."

Cohen and his attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

Experts tracking the case say indictments against Cohen are possible for bank and wire fraud. He could also end up becoming a target in Mueller's Russia investigation.

Mueller has already shown a willingness to play hardball. Former Trump aides Michael Flynn, Rick Gates and George Papadopoulos have all pleaded guilty to various criminal charges and are cooperating. Onetime campaign manager Paul Manafort has pleaded not guilty to bank fraud and tax evasion charges and is set to face trial starting in July.

Legal experts noted that federal authorities face an uphill climb in turning lawyers against their clients. "It's a bit of a moonshot if that's what they are trying to do," warned a second defense lawyer working on the Russia probe.

The prospect of years or even decades in prison might be easier to swallow if Cohen believes a presidential pardon is possible. White House officials and others close to the president insist that last week's decision to pardon former Vice President Dick Cheney's senior aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby on perjury charges dating to his service in the George W. Bush administration was not intended to send a message to Cohen — but it nonetheless could go a long way toward reassuring the president's lawyer.

"They're going to squeeze him like a grape. I think in the end he'll pop unless Trump pardons him," said Paul Rosenzweig, a senior fellow at the nonprofit R Street Institute and a former senior counsel during independent counsel Kenneth Starr's investigation into President Bill Clinton.

Hank Sheinkopf, a New York-based Democratic consultant who has worked with both Cohen and Trump, said the ties binding the attorney and the president will go a long way. But he, too, wouldn't rule out how the pressure of prosecution would influence Cohen.

"Here's a guy who appears to be very tough, very loyal and has said publicly about how he feels about Mr. Trump. That shouldn't change, but who knows what the future holds," he said. "People change when pressure is put on them. He's very loyal. He's very stand-up. It'd be a difficult decision for him to make."

Cohen flipping "would be Trump's worst nightmare," said John Dean, the former White House counsel whose cooperation with Watergate prosecutors helped lead to President Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974.

"It would be as stunning and life-disrupting a surprise as his winning the presidency," Dean added. "And if there is any prosecutor's office in the USA that can flip Cohen, it is the Southern District of New York."

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This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

To: Timothy Cama[tcama@thehill.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:42:58 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Timothy Cama [mailto:tcama@thehill.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Hi-

Could you confirm the Washington Post report that EPA is ending the Definers contract?

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer

The Hill

(202) 695-6245

Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

To: Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 6/8/2017 11:46:32 PM
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Cool! Let's find a solution tomorrow that checks all of these boxes. Have a good evening.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 7:19 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks, Jahan. No, I'm not pushing for Bulletin Intelligence. I think many managers and staff across the agency would benefit from getting compiled clips once a day. I'm not pushing a particular vendor over another. I completely understand the benefit of OPA getting clips in live time and I'm not suggesting we change that. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 7:15 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Let's talk tomorrow.

I sense you'd really like to get Bulletin but they don't alert stories, tv clips, radio hits and tweets in live time like the interns do.

For example, this weekend everyone was asking me for the Pruitt coverage from the Sunday shows.

Maybe there is a way to do both and make everyone happy, but in terms of actual press people (including everyone in your shop) we need stuff in live time so we can shape it before sometime goes viral, etc.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 7:06 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

We had around 500 receiving the clips when we used Bulletin Intelligence. It had crept up over time. As employees realized that their bosses were reading, we would get requests to added to the distribution list. Bulletin Intelligence did not place a limit on how many employees could receive. - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 6:37 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Updated Proposal...

Not that I'm aware of. Do you have any idea how many people we are talking about. I have about 130 EPA people on my press list.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2017, at 5:37 PM, Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks, Jahan. It looks competitive with other vendors I've seen. Do you know if there would be any limits on the number of recipients within EPA? - George

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 5:28 PM
To: Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Updated Proposal...

From: Joe Pounder [<mailto:jpounder@definerscorp.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:26 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Updated Proposal...

Mr. Wilcox,

Please find attached an updated proposal with examples of actual alerts and daily matrix. Please let us know if you have any other questions. Our plan is when it is rolled out to clients, these alerts will be compiled into our Definers Console where they will be also stored and searchable in addition to emailed directly to inboxes. Thanks again.

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definerscorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 9/13/2017 10:30:26 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by CTIA: RYAN and PELOSI to meet about Dreamers, as TRUMP huddles with moderates at the White House -- TIM SCOTT's pre-WH dinner -- FLYNN backed non-profit nuclear program -- SPOTTED at Kennedy Center -- B'DAY: Matt Mackowiak

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by CTIA

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

Good Wednesday morning. SPOTTED: Jared and Ivanka at Masseria last night... **SEN. TIM SCOTT (R-S.C.)** having dinner with J.D. Vance, Sean Parker and Steve Case at Fiola Mare last night.

WHAT D.C. WILL BE TALKING ABOUT TODAY ...

-- **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** is meeting with **HOUSE MINORITY LEADER NANCY PELOSI** at 5 p.m. to discuss legislative options to protect Dreamers, Heather Caygle scoops. <http://politi.co/2w7Tf8s> To say this is an early-stage conversation would be an understatement. They're just touching gloves. (**CHEAT SHEET**, courtesy Steve Shepard and the good folks at Morning Consult -- "Poll: Majority wants Congress to establish path to citizenship for DACA recipients" <http://politi.co/2h0Bpx2>)

-- **PRESIDENT TRUMP** is meeting with a bipartisan group of moderate House lawmakers, including the Problem Solvers Caucus. <http://politi.co/2joKaBV>
REMEMBER, MR. PRESIDENT: Often times, conservatives have enough clout to outweigh anything moderates want to do.

-- **SEN. TIM SCOTT** will be at the White House this afternoon to meet with the president.

THE BIG PICTURE -- THE UNTOUCHABLE PRESIDENT - "Teflon Donald Trump: Democrats have attacked the president every which way, but polling and focus groups show none of it's working," by Isaac Dove: "Democrats tried attacking Donald Trump as unfit for the presidency. They've made the case that he's ineffective, pointing to his failure to sign a single major piece of legislation into law after eight months in the job.

They've argued that Trump is using the presidency to enrich himself, and that his campaign was in cahoots with Russia. None of it is working. Data from a range of focus groups and internal polls in swing states paint a grim picture for the Democratic Party heading into the 2018 midterms and 2020 presidential election.

"It suggests that Democrats are naive if they believe Trump's historically low approval numbers mean a landslide is coming. The party is defending 10 Senate seats in states that Trump won and needs to flip 17 House seats to take control of that chamber. The research, conducted by private firms and for Democratic campaign arms, is rarely made public but was described to POLITICO in interviews with a dozen top operatives who've been analyzing the results coming in." ***With cameos by Bill Burton, Matt Canter, Steve Israel, Guy Cecil, Peter Hart, Anson Kaye, Ali Lapp, and Celinda Lake***
<http://politi.co/2y4WNWa>

JOSH DAWSEY SCOOPS -- FLYNN BACK ON THE HOT SEAT: "Flynn backed for-profit nuclear scheme inside Trump transition": "As a top official in President Donald Trump's transition team, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn actively promoted a private-sector scheme to build dozens of nuclear reactors across the Middle East known informally in the transition as the 'Marshall Plan.' But he did not publicly disclose that backers of the plan had paid him at least \$25,000. Flynn communicated during the transition with the backers of the for-profit plan, billed as a way of strengthening ties between the U.S. and Arab allies looking to develop nuclear power capability.

"Meanwhile, the Trump adviser expressed his support for the plan with people inside the transition-and discussed its merits with others beyond Trump Tower, according to sources within and close to the Trump team at that time. Flynn's consulting work for the company has been previously reported, but not the extent of his involvement during the Trump transition, nor the full amount he was paid for it. ... Robert Kelner, a Flynn lawyer, declined to comment.

"Flynn has not been accused of wrongdoing in the matter, and it is unclear if he faces any legal liability. But the new details underscore the way Flynn seemed to commingle his private consulting work prior to Trump's election and his semi-official duties afterward-something that has drawn legal scrutiny and created political headaches for a Trump White House that granted him access to the government's deepest secrets."
<http://politi.co/2xYtDHy>

THE TAX REFORM PUSH -- The White House is pushing outside groups to ramp up its messaging machine to launch a full on sales pitch for a tax overhaul. **NANCY COOK** emails us: "[O]n Tuesday, a member of the White House press shop blasted out an email to outside stakeholder groups titled 'Trump Tax Cut Blitz!' with suggested articles to push out and tweet about the administration's efforts. The email also listed five different events that the president, senior administration officials, and Cabinet secretaries including Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and SBA Administrator Linda McMahon were participating in to boost a potential tax overhaul, according to the note obtained by POLITICO."

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS CHAIRMAN KEVIN BRADY -- along with GOP leadership -- is holding a Republican conference meeting today on tax reform. **COLIN WILHELM** notes to us that "No new details expected, just early effort to engage members more and avoid the feeling of a top down effort."

-- **WAP0'S DAMIAN PALETTA, SEAN SULLIVAN and KELSEY SNELL: "Trump's push for tax cuts is coming up against a familiar challenge: Divided GOP":** "Trump advisers and top congressional leaders, hoping to assuage conservatives hungry for details, are working urgently to assemble a framework that they hope to release next week, according to White House aides and lawmakers. But after months of negotiations, the thorniest disagreement remains in view: how to pay for the giant tax cuts Trump has promised.

"Negotiators agree with the goal of slashing the corporate income tax rate and also cutting individual income taxes. But they have yet to agree about which tax breaks should be cut to pay for it all. In private talks, Trump advisers are pressing to eliminate or reduce several popular tax deductions, including the interest companies pay on debt, state and local income taxes paid by families and individuals, and the hugely popular mortgage interest deduction." <http://wapo.st/2woPkPA>

-- **NANCY COOK and RACHAEL BADE: "Republicans suspicious of 'Democrats' Cohn and Mnuchin as tax plans take shape:** Conservatives are wondering if Gary Cohn and Steven Mnuchin will work to keep the GOP's right flank happy on tax reform rather than appeal for Democratic votes to get a package passed" <http://politi.co/2xjVi8y>

BREAKTHROUGH -- "Senate Finance leaders announce 5-year CHIP deal," by Rachana Pradhan: "The Senate Finance Committee has agreed to a five-year funding extension for the Children's Health Insurance Program, the tax-writing panel's top Republican and Democrat announced Tuesday evening. The announcement from Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and ranking member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) came with Congress careening toward an end-of-the-month deadline to extend federal funding for a program that covers roughly 9 million low-income children. ... The proposed legislation would maintain Obamacare's 23 percent increase in the federal matching rate to states for 2018 and 2019 and begin to ratchet it down in 2020, according to GOP and Democratic aides. The bump is set at 11.5 percent in 2020 and would be totally eliminated starting in 2021." <http://politi.co/2wZRs3K>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture. Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

FOR YOUR RADAR -- "White House Weighs Lowering Refugee Quota to Below 50,000," by NYT's Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Miriam Jordan: "The Trump administration

is considering reducing the number of refugees admitted to the country over the next year to below 50,000, according to current and former government officials familiar with the discussions, the lowest number since at least 1980. ... In his first days in office he took steps to radically reduce the program that resettles refugees in American cities and towns, capping the number admitted at 50,000 as part of his executive order banning travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries. ... But in recent weeks, as the deadline approached for Mr. Trump to issue the annual determination for refugee admissions required by the Refugee Act of 1980, some inside the White House - led by Stephen Miller, Mr. Trump's senior adviser for policy - have pressed to set the ceiling even lower." <http://nyti.ms/2f5pWfj>

--WAPO: "Supreme Court agrees with Trump administration, says some refugees can be barred for now": <http://wapo.st/2f4iDV1>

-- "Top White House Official to Discuss Climate Change at U.N.," by NYT's Lisa Friedman: "Gary D. Cohn, the chief White House economic adviser, is convening senior climate and energy ministers from about a dozen nations in advance of next week's United Nations General Assembly meeting, the White House confirmed Tuesday. The breakfast in New York next Monday will be held against a backdrop of devastation in the United States and the Caribbean from two monster hurricanes that scientists say may have been made more ferocious by warming trends." <http://nyti.ms/2vT3ZDa>

AMAZON'S TOP SELLING BOOKS -- 1. Hillary Clinton: "What Happened." ... 3. Katy Tur: "Unbelievable: My Front-Row Seat to the Craziest Campaign in American History".

THE LATEST ON NORTH KOREA ...

-- "North Korea defiant over U.N. sanctions as Trump says tougher steps needed," by Reuters' Jack Kim in Seoul and Roberta Rampton in Washington: "The North's Foreign Ministry said the resolutions were an infringement on its legitimate right to self-defence and aimed at 'completely suffocating its state and people through full-scale economic blockade.' 'The DPRK will redouble the efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence and to preserve peace and security of the region by establishing the practical equilibrium with the U.S.,' it said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency." <http://reut.rs/2y4pbaR>

-- "Amid NKorea crisis, Mattis focuses on U.S. doomsday arsenal," by AP's Robert Burns: "As North Korea flaunts its new nuclear muscle, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is spotlighting the overwhelming numerical superiority of America's doomsday arsenal. On Wednesday he is dropping in on ground zero of American nuclear firepower: Minot Air Force base in North Dakota, home to more than 100 land-based nuclear missiles as well as nuclear bomb-toting aircraft. He also will receive briefings at Strategic Command, whose top officer would command nuclear forces in war." <http://politi.co/2xYiQNr>

WHAT FOGGY BOTTOM IS READING -- "U.S. Is Said to Test Support for

Extending Iran Nuclear Limits," by Bloomberg's Nick Wadhams: "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is turning to U.S. allies in Europe as he seeks a way to salvage the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran a month before President Donald Trump faces a deadline to decide whether to walk away from what he's called 'the worst deal ever.' U.S. diplomats have approached European officials to see if they would join in demanding an extension to limits on Iran's uranium enrichment that are set to expire in 2025."

<https://bloom.bg/2joQdX9>

PUTIN WATCH -- "Russia Sought A Broad Reset With Trump, Secret Document Shows," by BuzzFeed's John Hudson: "In the third month of Donald Trump's presidency, Vladimir Putin dispatched one of his diplomats to the State Department to deliver a bold proposition: the full normalization of relations between the United States and Russia across all major branches of government. The proposal, spelled out in a detailed document obtained by BuzzFeed News, called for the wholesale restoration of diplomatic, military, and intelligence channels severed between the two countries after Russia's military interventions in Ukraine and Syria. The broad scope of the Kremlin's reset plan came with an ambitious launch date: immediately." <http://bzfd.it/2f3wdrO>

TRUMP INC. -- "How India Became the World Leader in Trump Projects," by Blake Schmidt in Bloomberg: "In western India, a pair of shiny black Trump buildings with gold insignia tower over the city of Pune. In nearby Mumbai, a 75-story Trump skyscraper will be one of the tallest in the megacity. In a swanky suburb of Delhi, two Trump partners have big plans. And in Kolkata, a new Trump tower is under way. ... India has become the only major developing country where his business is roaring. It has the most construction projects with Trump licensing deals of any country outside of the U.S. ... Asked about potential conflicts in India, the Trump Organization said it's 'very proud of the success we have achieved in that market with five active properties under various stages of development.'" <https://bloom.bg/2xYHrS7>

FROM LONDON PLAYBOOK -- WOODY SPEAKS: "The new U.S. ambassador in London Woody Johnson made his inaugural speech last night and he had words to cheer the hearts of Brexiteers. 'As far as the president is concerned, the United Kingdom, our most enduring ally, is always at the head of the line,' Johnson said. 'The United States is committed to standing with the U.K. through Brexit.' He also sought to reassure Brits that he is a long-standing friend of President Trump, and that 'when you get to know him, you'll like him.'" **Prepared remarks** <http://bit.ly/2wUYec2> ... **Subscribe to London Playbook** <http://politi.co/2xfDPuK>

-- **SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON** is in London today.

THE JUICE ...

-- **THE SENATE LEADERSHIP FUND**, the outside group aligned with GOP leadership, continues to pound Roy Moore in the Alabama Senate race. The group dropped \$714,075 in TV and radio ads this week, according to an FEC filing.

-- **NANCY GIBBS** is stepping down as editor-in-chief of Time after 32 years with the company and 4 years leading the magazine. Rich Battista and Alan Murray have not yet named her replacement. **Gibbs' staff memo** <http://politi.co/2wZO5sl> ... **Battista and Murray email** <http://politi.co/2h05ey4>

-- **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** in August "transferred \$2 million to the NRCC, bringing his total haul for House Republicans' campaign arm to nearly \$30 million in 2017," Elena Schneider reports. "Ryan's fundraising accounted for more than half of what the NRCC raised in August, just before a round of GOP retirements put more battleground districts at risk ahead of a potentially difficult -- and expensive -- 2018 election for House Republicans." <http://politi.co/2w7f1Jn>

POLITICO celebrated the launch of its London Playbook last night at the Institute for Government in London. POLITICO European Editor Matt Kaminski and POLITICO CEO Patrick Steel kicked off the soiree. London Mayor Sadiq Khan sent kind words. The fete brought together Anna, EU Playbooker Ryan Heath and London Playbooker Jack Blanchard for the first time. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2wWBzfv>

JOE POMPEO in Vanity Fair -- "**Maggie Haberman and Glenn Thrush Take the Next Step with Trump**": "The announcement that New York Times White House correspondents Maggie Haberman and Glenn Thrush have agreed to do a Trump book for Random House, as I first reported Tuesday, was both bombshell journalism news and something of a foregone conclusion. ...

"**But the duo's ambition for the as-yet-untitled book** ... is to do something that goes beyond the palace intrigue (though there'll be plenty of that as well) to tell a larger story about who Trump is, why the country chose him, and what it all says about America and where we're headed. They've told people that they want the book to be 'durable,' and that, 'We want this to mean something.' ...

"**The Haberman-Thrush collaboration** enters an already-crowded field of Trump books. Joshua Green's recently published account of the Donald Trump-Steve Bannon partnership reached No. 1 on the New York Times list. Mark Halperin and John Heilemann are working on a third installment in their Game Change series; Politico Playbook columnists Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman have inked a deal for a book on the backroom dramas of Capitol Hill; Amy Chozick and Katy Tur landed campaign memoirs; and Rosie Gray has a biography of Breitbart News in the making." <http://bit.ly/2eVUfBw>

--**NYT**: "Twelve, an imprint of Grand Central Publishing, will release the book by Michael Isikoff and David Corn in March. According to the publisher, the book, tentatively titled 'The Russian Connection,' will go behind the scenes of Russia's attempts to influence the election, and will also analyze Trump's decades-long dealings with Russia as well as the historical relationship between the two countries." <http://nyti.ms/2y4i0zB>

Playbook Reads



PHOTO DU JOUR: Jean Chatelier walks through a street flooded by Hurricane Irma to retrieve his uniform from his house to return to work today at a supermarket in Fort Myers, Fla., on Sept. 12. | David Goldman/AP Photo

JUST POSTED - JIM RUTENBERG in the upcoming Times Magazine, **"RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War:** How the Kremlin built one of the most powerful information weapons of the 21st century - and why it may be impossible to stop."
<http://nyti.ms/2fhCOM6>

DATAPOINT -- "Sanders will introduce universal health care, backed by 15 Democrats," by WaPo's Dave Weigel: "'This is where the country has got to go,' Sanders said in an interview at his Senate office. 'Right now, if we want to move away from a dysfunctional, wasteful, bureaucratic system into a rational health-care system that guarantees coverage to everyone in a cost-effective way, the only way to do it is Medicare for All.' Sanders's bill, the Medicare for All Act of 2017, has no chance of passage in a Republican-run Congress. But the bill is already backed by most of the senators seen as likely 2020 Democratic candidates -- if not by most senators facing tough reelection battles in 2018." <http://wapo.st/2x0AG4V>

JON MEACHAM in the NYT, **"What Happened'? They Lost. With Her Memoir, Hillary Clinton Joins a Haunted Club":** "She had packed for victory. There had been a white suit for election night at the Javits Center beneath a glass ceiling; white was the color of the suffragists who, a century earlier, had at last won the franchise for women. But now, in the morning hours after Donald J. Trump's White House upset, Hillary Clinton donned gray and purple for her concession to the country. ... For there had been a different plan.

"The gray and purple, she writes, was the 'one I had intended to wear on my first trip to Washington as President Elect.' And so Clinton's starkly titled 'What Happened' now joins what we might call the Kempton Collection, after the New York columnist Murray Kempton, who always believed that the real story was to be found not amid the sprays of Champagne among winners but in the tragic bleakness of the losers' locker rooms."
<http://nyti.ms/2eUxNbR>

BEN SMITH in BuzzFeed, **"There's Blood In The Water In Silicon Valley: The bad new politics of big tech":** "The blinding rise of Donald Trump over the past year has masked another major trend in American politics: the palpable, and perhaps permanent, turn against the tech industry. The new corporate leviathans that used to be seen as bright new avatars of American innovation are increasingly portrayed as sinister new centers of unaccountable power, a transformation likely to have major consequences for the industry and for American politics. That turn has accelerated in recent days: Steve Bannon and Bernie Sanders both want big tech treated as, in Bannon's words in Hong

Kong this week, 'public utilities.'

"Tucker Carlson and Franklin Foer have found common ground. Even the group No Labels, an exquisitely poll-tested effort to create a safe new center, is on board. Rupert Murdoch, never shy to use his media power to advance his commercial interests, is hard at work. 'Anti-trust is back, baby,' Yelp's policy chief, Luther Lowe, DM'd me after Fox News gave him several minutes to make the antitrust case against Yelp's giant rival Google to its audience of millions." <http://bzfd.it/2wYGQRf>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

SCOTUS WATCH -- "Supreme Court blocks ruling against Texas redistricting," by Josh Gerstein: "A sharply divided Supreme Court has blocked a lower court ruling that a congressional district map Texas adopted in 2013 violates the Constitution and is the product of intentional racial discrimination. The high court announced Tuesday night that the justices voted, 5-4, along partisan lines to block a three-judge panel's ruling that Texas needed to redraw the maps or face having them redrawn by the court. The stay will remain in place until the Supreme Court receives and acts on an appeal expected to be filed by the State of Texas." <http://politi.co/2xwTBFY>

FUN READ -- "Trump ambassador qualifications: Wrote a cookbook, sang in a church choir," by Yahoo's Olivier Knox: "Following in his predecessors' footsteps, President Trump has tapped generous political supporters to join the ranks of America's ambassadors. Among their official, administration-vetted qualifications: church choir singer, cookbook writer, and Fox News punditry. ... [T]he 'Certificates of Competency' that the Trump administration is required to produce for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee can make for interesting reading." <https://yhoo.it/2fhhbur>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao sitting in coach on a Delta flight from Detroit to DCA after giving a speech on self-driving cars ... at Scarlet Oak in Navy Yard: Steny Hoyer dining with a bunch of Dem. members including Reps. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.), Annie Kuster (D-N.H.), Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) and Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) ... Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) last night at 801 Bar ... Leon Panetta lunching in the back corner booth of

the Capital Grille on Pennsylvania yesterday

OUT AND ABOUT - PBS and Bank of America hosted an advance screening of "The Vietnam War," Ken Burns' new mini-series last night at the Kennedy Center. Martha Raddatz hosted a Q&A with Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), John Kerry, Chuck Hagel, Burns and co-filmmaker Lynn Novick after they showed six clips from the astounding 18-hour documentary, which premieres on Sunday at 8 p.m. The Lumineers also played the cover of Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues." Vietnam war veterans in the audience were asked twice to stand up so that they could be recognized by the crowd.

Preview <http://bit.ly/2wpH2ak> ... **PICS -- the McCain-Kerry-Hagel panel**

<http://bit.ly/2y4yW90> ... **Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan** <http://bit.ly/2fhxZCC> ...

The Lumineers <http://bit.ly/2gZGQwu>

SPOTTED: Brian Moynihan, Anne Finucane, Larry Di Rita, Don Baer, Mike Barnicle, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Teresa Heinz Kerry, Bob Kerrey, Diane Lane, Cindy McCain, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Reps. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.), Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.), and Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.), former Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), Admiral Mike Mullen, Bob Woodward, Valerie Jarrett, David Bradley, Bret and Amy Baier, Greta Van Susteren and John Coale, Peter Baker, Maureen Orth and Luke Russert, Bob Costa and his dad (**pic** <http://bit.ly/2vSSc8d>), Mark Ein, Tammy Haddad

...

... **Amy Weiss and Peter Kadzik**, Betsy and Jonathan Martin and his parents, Annie Linskey, James Hohmann, Alice Lloyd, Steve Ricchetti, Ryan Williams, Julia Convertini, Craig Gordon, Ben Chang, Reggie Love, Lauren Pratapas, Mark Ein, Jeremy Peters, Jane Harman, Stephanie Cutter, Wendy Sherman, Amb. John Negroponte, Michael Moroney and Francesca Chambers.<???R;q<

SPOTTED at the opening night of Nobu: D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, former Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake, John Falcicchio, Spike Mendelsohn, Dannia Hakki and Vinoda Basnayake ... at WeWork Apollo on H Street in DC last night: Robby Mook, Matt Rhoades and Eric Rosenbach of Harvard's Belfer Center hosting a forum on their bipartisan "Defending Digital Democracy" initiative to prevent hacking in campaigns -- **Lauren Dezenski's story this morning on the initiative** <http://politi.co/2wVWNKm>

SPOTTED at Ron Dermer's annual Rosh Hashanah bash yesterday at his residence in Maryland: Boris Epshteyn, Sam Feist, Josh and Ali Rogin, Max Weinberg of the E street band, Ruth Marcus, Norm Eisen, Eli Lake, Michael Wilner, Aaron David Miller.

WHITE HOUSE DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- PAM STEVENS is out of the Trump administration after two and a half months as associate director of external affairs in the Office of Drug Control Policy. Her last day was Monday. She told us: "I enthusiastically accepted a position at the Office of Drug Control Policy ... to set-up the office of External Affairs in anticipation of a nominee for Drug Czar. As that has been now been accomplished with President Trump's selection of Rep. Tom Marino (R-Pa.), I am now, as expected, moving on to another role."

--**Evan Walker**, who most recently worked in the Office of Digital Strategy for President Trump, is moving over to the House Republican Conference to work for Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (Wash.) to be senior digital strategist. Walker has also been content and creative director at the RNC.

TRANSITIONS -- Alec Zimmerman has been promoted to communications director of the Republican Party of Wisconsin. He joined as press secretary in January. ... **Mario H. Lopez**, president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, has been named by FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to serve on the FCC's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- @EricTrump: ".@LaraLeaTrump and I are excited to announce the birth of our son, Eric 'Luke' Trump at 8:50 [Tuesday] morning." **Pic**
<http://bit.ly/2x0sCRI>

BIRTHWEEK (was Monday): Rick Parnell, who steps down as COO of the UN Foundation on Oct. 1 (hat tip: Caleb Tiller)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Vivian Schiller, editor in chief at Weber Shandwick and a Twitter, NBC, NPR and NYT alum. **A trend she thinks is uncovered**: "News literacy. It's not just about making sure students consume and share the 'right' news, it's fundamentally about teaching kids to think critically as they navigate the world through their mobile devices. Our education system has failed to modernize in the face of the vastly different way the kids experience the world." **Read her Playbook Plus Q&A**:
<http://politi.co/2xxK41k>

BIRTHDAYS: Matt Mackowiak, Austin-based GOP consultant ... Erin Antosh ... Tavis Smiley ... Jennifer Pflieger ... Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) (h/t Dave Pasch) ... Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), celebrating by attending the Washington Nationals vs. Atlanta Braves baseball game tonight, hosted by House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer ... Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.) ... Rep. Roger Williams (R-Tex.) ... Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.) ... Michael Weisel (h/t Jon Haber) ... Katie Connelly, VP at Benenson Strategy Group ... Todd Thurman (h/t Brian Darling) ... Jose Morales of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee ... Mark Mellman ... Denise Matyka (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Politico's Henry "CJ" Jackson, a "big time Arsenal fan, husband to Johanna, father to Hugh" (h/t Ben Chang) ... Reuters' Ginger Gibson ... Alexandra Varipapa ... Politico's Lindsay Knight ... Richard Pollock, senior investigative reporter at The Daily Caller News Foundation ... Donald Garrett, management analyst in the IG's office at the VA ...

... **Kelsey Smith**, Leader Pelosi's director of scheduling/advance ... Colorado State Rep. Jonathan Singer is 38 (h/t Jewish Insider) ... Casey Dolan Labbanicz, Andrea Mitchell's senior producer (h/t Olivia Petersen) ... Marian Cannon Schlesinger, the first wife of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., the Harvard historian, counselor to and chronicler of John F. Kennedy, is 105. She's celebrating "in her house where she's lived for three-quarters of a century right off Harvard Square" (h/t David Andelman) ... Ryan Hambleton ... Sanette

Tanaka, senior product designer at Vox Media and a WSJ alum ... TV producer Fred Silverman ... Politico alum Kathryn Smith ... Cornyn alum Tina Gray ... Gary Ritterstein, senior analyst at Lake Research Partners ... Danielle Burr of Peck Madigan Jones ... Robin Denton Meszoly ... James Ferrari ... Bill Wright ... Douglas Knight.

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** We need new rules for new 5G networks. New policies that will allow the U.S. to win the race to 5G and enable breakthrough advancements in healthcare, transportation, energy and more. First, a pipeline of low-, mid-, and high-band spectrum will help meet today's mobile needs and enable the 5G networks of tomorrow. Second, every level of government must modernize their rules for the building of small cell wireless infrastructure. Third, permanent and common sense federal regulations for interstate services like mobile broadband will preserve an open internet and protect consumer privacy while promoting innovation and investment. Finally, America's tax structure must be updated to spur billions of dollars in new 5G investment. Learn more about how wireless is working to invest in America's future at CTIA.org. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: E&E News
Sent: Mon 8/7/2017 8:17:55 PM
Subject: August 7 -- E&E News PM is ready

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AN E&E NEWS PUBLICATION

E&E NEWS PM — Mon., August 7, 2017

 [READ FULL EDITION](#)

1.SUPREME COURT:

Mich. utility asks justices to take up air permitting fight

A Michigan utility has asked the Supreme Court to take up the legal battle over air permitting at one of the nation's largest coal-fired power plants.

THIS AFTERNOON'S STORIES

2.ENDANGERED SPECIES:

Trump admin denies Pacific bluefin protections

3.SAGE GROUSE:

Jeers, cheers greet report proposing to alter Obama plans

4.CHEMICALS:

EPA completes review backlog

5.CLIMATE:

Jabs, 'bogus' claims, hacks pepper Maher interview with Gore

6.PEOPLE:

McEnany tapped as new face of RNC, 'Trump TV'

UPCOMING HEARINGS AND MARKUPS

7.CALENDAR:

Activity for August 7 - August 13, 2017

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To: Lisa Friedman[lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 6:41:24 PM
Subject: RE: Follow up question on MJ story

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:21 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Follow up question on MJ story

And why was this a no-bid contract when other companies perform the same service?

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

On Dec 15, 2017, at 10:20 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition

Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Lisa Friedman [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov](mailto: Bowman.Liz@epa.gov)>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Follow up question on MJ story

Hello,

Can you please provide a comment about why the news compilation that Definers has been hired to do can not be performed in house?

Secondly - were there any issues with Bulletin that caused EPA to switch providers for this service?

Third, as there are clearly other companies that perform this work – – like the one EPA had previously contracted with – – can you please provide an explanation of why this was a no-bid contract.

Thank you,

Lisa

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, The New York Times

202-862-0306 office

202-251-2083 cell

Lisa.Friedman@nytimes.com

Twitter: @LFFriedman

To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 7:02:06 PM
Subject: Definers -- Clips

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Huddle
Sent: Mon 10/23/2017 11:57:59 AM
Subject: POLITICO Huddle, presented by The Science Coalition: TRUMP TRIES TO RALLY THE TROOPS – Fincher enters Tenn Senate race – SENATE VOTES ON HURRICANE AID – House Intel questions Trump digital director

10/23/2017 07:56 AM EDT

By Heather Caygle (hcaygle@politico.com or [@heatherscope](https://twitter.com/heatherscope))

TRUMP TRIES TO RALLY THE TROOPS - Both the House and Senate are back this week with Republicans desperate to keep up momentum in their march toward tax reform. President Donald Trump hit House Republicans with some tough love during a conference call Sunday, telling lawmakers they need to pass the Senate budget as soon as possible - or pay a heavy price in 2018. The House is expected to vote on the Senate budget later this week, a move that, if successful, will allow Republicans to muscle through a tax overhaul in the Senate via a simple majority vote. "We are on the verge of doing something very, very historic," Trump said on the call.

What's at stake: House conservatives are facing heavy pressure to swallow a budget that goes against their core principles by adding \$1.5 trillion to the deficit. But Trump and other GOP leaders, including Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and House Budget Chairwoman Diane Black (R-Tenn.), argue the move will speed things up and likely result in the House passing a bill to rewrite the tax code by Thanksgiving. Trump has also reached out to some reluctant House conservatives one-on-one recently and the president will be on the Hill to huddle with Senate Republicans tomorrow. Rachael with the deets: <http://politi.co/2hYZGR2>

'It's going to come': But Republicans know the biggest obstacle to tax reform could be the president himself, as [Bernie Becker and Aaron Lorenzo report](#). Trump has a penchant for distractions - see his latest [ongoing spat with Rep. Frederica Wilson](#) (D-Fla.) - and has undercut his party by making deals with Democratic leaders and publicly criticizing Republican-led legislative efforts. GOP lawmakers are already bracing for Trump to disrupt tax negotiations: "Sure, it's going to come," said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), who had his own very public feud with the president recently.

"I think the Democrats are crazy to not try and deal with him directly," Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) said, [the Washington Post reports](#). "Seven years ago, he was a Democrat. It doesn't take any brains to realize that he'd be open." Even so, the president tried to reassure anxious GOP lawmakers about his loyalty on the call yesterday: "I'm a Republican inside-out and backwards," [Trump said](#).

FRIEND-IN-CHIEF - Trump and Sen. Lindsey Graham have come a long way since sparring on the campaign trail, when they were trading put-downs like "jackass" and "idiot." Now they're talking daily on the phone, regularly hitting the links together on the weekends and the president even gave Graham a guided tour on a Marine One ride back to the White House. The South Carolina Republican has built up sizable influence in recent months and is so entrenched that the

White House has sought Graham's input on health care, Iran and even whip counts, even though he is not a committee chairman and isn't in leadership, Burgess and Josh Dawsey report.

Watch your back: Graham does have some competition for Trump's affections, including Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who also golfed with the president recently. But Graham doesn't seem worried: "Uh, no. Everybody's on my side and Rand's just Rand," he said. Sergio Gor, Paul's spokesman, hit back, calling Graham one of D.C.'s "leading swamp creatures." Burgess and Dawsey with much more: <http://politi.co/2hZihN0>

ALRIGHT Y'ALL, IT'S MONDAY. WE'RE HERE. WE'RE CAFFEINATED. Welcome to Oct. 23 and thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Huddle, the play-by-play guide to all things Capitol Hill. In case you missed it, Alabama rolled over the Tennessee Volunteers this weekend, whooping them 45-7. Bres is still celebrating the big victory.

FRIDAY'S MOST CLICKED: Sarah and Seung Min's [story about what's next for tax reform](#) after the Senate passed its budget was the winner, just beating out my Friday jams link to Huddle's [favorite Hall and Oates ditty](#).

MOVEMENT ON HEALTH CARE DEAL? Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said he'd be willing to bring the bipartisan Alexander-Murray health care bill to the floor for a vote - if Trump gives his endorsement first. "I'm not certain yet, what the president is looking for here, but I'll be happy to bring a bill to the floor if I know President Trump would sign it," [McConnell said on CNN Sunday](#). Trump has wavered in his support for the bill to stabilize Obamacare markets over the last week, simultaneously encouraging the legislation while criticizing it as a bailout for insurance companies. At least 60 senators [have come out publicly in support](#) of the bill, enough to guarantee passage if it comes to the floor.

TENNESSEE SENATE RACE HEATS UP - Former Tennessee Rep. Stephen Fincher will take on Rep. Marsha Blackburn in the quest for retiring Sen. Bob Corker's seat next year. Fincher served in the House from 2011 until 2017. Fincher could appeal to the establishment wing of the party while Blackburn probably has him beat, at least for now, on statewide name recognition, reports the Tennessean. Joey Garrison with more: <http://tnne.ws/2hZDaaY>

QUOTE DU JOUR: Sen. John McCain seemed to take a swipe at Trump - without mentioning him by name - over the president's repeated Vietnam War deferments. "One aspect of the conflict by the way that I will never ever countenance is that we drafted the lowest income level of America and the highest income level found a doctor that would say that they had a bone spur," McCain [said on C-SPAN Sunday](#). "That is wrong. That is wrong. If we are going to ask every American to serve, every American should serve." Trump had five deferments during the Vietnam War, including one for bone spurs.

CASH CORNER - The Republican National Committee has raised more than \$104 million since Trump took office, relying in part on the president's tweets to cultivate small-dollar donors who have never contributed before, [the Hill reports](#). The RNC ended September with \$44 million in the bank while the Democratic National Committee only has \$7 million on hand, according to the latest FEC filings. The DNC is facing a daunting rebuilding effort under Tom Perez after a

contentious leadership battle earlier this year and many donors are refusing to write checks, Gabriel Debenedetti and Edward-Isaac Doovere report for POLITICO. "Donors, small and large, are so over the party," Nebraska party chair Jane Kleeb said.

And Democrats are jittery about the upcoming Virginia governor's race, worried about what a loss would mean for the party's strategy and fundraising just as it's about to gear up for the midterms, the Washington Post reports. More from Dave Weigel and Ed O'Keefe: <http://wapo.st/2hYdriV>

**** A message from The Science Coalition:** Join The Science Coalition on Wednesday for a panel discussion with the founders and CEOs of companies created from federally funded university research. Hear how American-made innovation - fueled by the nation's investment in basic scientific research - is creating jobs and sparking economic growth across the US. Learn more and RSVP: <http://bit.ly/2xISnmBTSCBriefing> **

SENATE CONSIDERS HURRICANE AID BILL - The Senate is expected to move quickly this week on a \$36.5 billion disaster relief package that passed the House earlier this month. The chamber will hold a procedural vote on the bill this evening with a vote on final passage expected no later than Tuesday. The bill would replenish disaster aid accounts and provide "\$16 billion to permit the financially troubled federal flood insurance program to pay an influx of Harvey-related claims. But it rejects requests from the powerful Texas and Florida congressional delegations for additional money to rebuild after hurricanes Harvey and Irma," the AP's Andrew Taylor reports. More: <http://bit.ly/2hYoJUv>

WARREN WATCH - Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), long known for eschewing hallway interviews that are common in the Capitol, is doing things a little differently now. Warren took questions from reporters after a hearing recently, an event so rare "that her office had to announce it was happening by e-mail first," the Boston Globe reports. Warren, who is up for reelection next year, is also engaging more with reporters back home, holding 42 media opportunities with Massachusetts reporters this year, and participating in off-the-record dinners with journalists in D.C. Republicans, meanwhile, say it's all an attempt to prepare her for a 2020 White House run. Victoria McGrane: <http://bit.ly/2hYRQXP>

BLURRED LINES - USA Today's Eliza Collins reports on the porous border between Breitbart's editorial department and Steve Bannon's personal political crusade. One recent example is when Breitbart's Matthew Boyle sat in on a meeting between Bannon and former Rep. Michael Grimm, who is trying to reclaim his old House seat. "Boyle 'didn't ask questions, but as the meeting turned from 'Who are you and should we support you?' to 'OK we're going to support you. What are we gonna do for you?' he got more involved in the discussions,'" said Michael Caputo, a Grimm aide. "It seemed to me like he gained interest and he said, 'Look, this is something that fits into our editorial direction. How can we work together?'" More: <https://usat.ly/2zv2j4g>

COMING ATTRACTIONS - The House Intelligence Committee will interview Brad Parscale, digital director for the Trump campaign, on Tuesday as part of its ongoing Russia probe. This is Parscale's first appearance before any of the congressional committees looking into Russian

meddling, the Wall Street Journal's Julie Bykowicz reports. Parscale recently told *60 Minutes* that any idea the Trump campaign colluded with Russia is "just a joke." Meanwhile, hopes on Capitol Hill are rapidly dwindling that any of the three committees investigating Russia will provide an "authoritative and bipartisan accounting" of what actually happened during the campaign, reports Nicholas Fandos for the New York Times.

TODAY IN CONGRESS - The House gavel in at 12 p.m. with votes on several noncontroversial bills postponed until 6:30 p.m. Today's agenda: <http://bit.ly/2hXNsII>. The Senate meets at 3 p.m. with a roll call vote related to the hurricane aid bill at 5:30 p.m.

AROUND THE HILL - Things are quiet until lawmakers return to the Hill this evening.

FRIDAY'S TRIVIA WINNER - Eva Hicks was first to guess that former Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell is a judo champion, winning national titles and competing in the 1964 summer Olympics. Campbell represented Colorado from 1993 until 2005.

TODAY'S TRIVIA - These two men have the distinction of holding two of the same offices during their careers in government, the only grandfather-grandson pair to do so. Name them and the **two** offices they both held. Send your best guess my way: hcaygle@politico.com. The first person to correctly answer gets a mention in the next edition of Huddle.

GET HUDDLE emailed to your phone each morning.

**** A message from The Science Coalition:** The Science Coalition's Sparking Economic Growth report identifies companies created from federally funded university research. Each company is a shining example of how America leads the world in science and technology - and why the United States must continue to invest robustly in basic scientific research to ensure that we maintain this leadership. Hear from the president of Network Perception and how this company, spun out of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from DHS and NSF-supported research, has developed software to illuminate firewall risks in complex computer networks. <http://bit.ly/2xJe1qC>NetworkP **

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/huddle/2017/10/23/trump-tries-to-rally-the-troops-fincher-enters-tenn-senate-race-senate-votes-on-hurricane-aid-house-intel-questions-trump-digital-director-222936>

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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Tue 5/23/2017 10:46:04 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD): 22 DEAD in Manchester horror -- TRUMP: terrorists are 'evil losers in life' -- Eliana and Dawsey SCOOP: LEWANDOWSKI, BOSSIE back in the mix -- GARCETTI talks 2020

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)
05/23/2017 06:43 AM EDT

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Good Tuesday morning. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP in BETHLEHEM offered his "deepest condolences to those so terribly injured in this terrorist attack" in Manchester, United Kingdom.

NEW LINE ALERT -- "LOSERS" -- TRUMP in the West Bank: Terrorists are **"EVIL LOSERS IN LIFE."** **TRUMP'S EXPLANATION**, via pooler Mike Memoli: "So many young, beautiful innocent people living and enjoying their lives murdered by evil losers in life. I won't call them monsters because they would like that term. They would think that's a great name. I will call them from now on losers, because that's what they are. They're losers. And we'll have more of them. But they're losers. Just remember that."

MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS FRONT PAGE -- "MASSACRE: 22 CHILDREN AND ADULTS ARE MURDERED BY SUICIDE BOMBER AT ARENA POP CONCERT"
<http://bit.ly/2q6NAwi>

AP at 6:05 a.m.: "LONDON (AP) - British prime minister says terrorist attack among the worst Britain has experienced."

-- THE LATEST: AP at 5:17 a.m., by Jill Lawless in Manchester and Gregory Katz in London, with Leanne Italie in New York, Mesfin Fekadu in Jersey City and Lori Hinnant and John Leicester in Paris: "An apparent suicide bomber attacked an Ariana Grande concert as it ended Monday night, killing 22 people among a panicked crowd of young concertgoers, some still wearing the star's trademark kitten ears and holding pink

balloons as they fled.

"Teenage screams filled the arena just after the explosion, which also killed the attacker and injured dozens. The attack sparked a nightlong search for loved ones - parents for the children they had accompanied or agreed to pick up, and friends for each other after groups were scattered by the blast. Twitter and Facebook were filled with appeals for the missing. ... There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Chief Constable Ian Hopkins said police are treating the blast as an act of terrorism 'until we know otherwise.' ...

"Forensic investigations are trying to determine if the attacker had accomplices, Hopkins said. He provided no information about the person who set off the bomb.... There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Supporters of the extremist Islamic State group, which holds territory in Iraq's Mosul and around its de facto capital in the Syrian city of Raqqa, celebrated the blast online. ... If the explosion is confirmed as a terrorist attack it would be the deadliest in Britain since four suicide bombers killed 52 London commuters on three subway trains and a bus in July 2005."

<http://apne.ws/2rOiVA5>

AP BULLETIN at 4:42 a.m. -- "SEOUL, South Korea (AP) - South Korean military says it fired warning shot after unidentified object flew south from North Korea."

ON THE WORLD STAGE -- "Turkey tests Trump's patience after protesters roughed up," by Nahal Toosi: "Turkish officials, under pressure to prove loyalty to their autocratic president, are casting fresh blame on the United States following a violent clash last week between Turkish security guards and protesters in Washington. And there's not a whole lot the Trump administration can do about it.

"Turkey's Foreign Ministry on Monday summoned the U.S. ambassador in Ankara to lodge a formal protest days after Washington police intervened to stop Turkish security officials from beating up protesters. The violence near the Turkish embassy came soon after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with President Donald Trump at the White House, and video caught Erdogan watching some of the skirmish.

"The May 16 melee and subsequent diplomatic kerfuffle have offered an astonishing glimpse into the growing hostility between America and Turkey, two NATO allies at odds over how best to fight Islamic State terrorists, among other disputes."

<http://politi.co/2rvlcnu>

TOP MIDDLE-EAST TWEETS -- Bill Booth (@BoothWilliam), Jerusalem bureau chief for the Washington Post: "Between the lines: Trump tells Abbas to curb incitement, condemn attacks against Israeli civilians & stop payments to prisoners and martyrs" ... **@Yair_Rosenberg**: "Oh man, watch Israeli ambassador Ron Dermer (on right couch) react when Trump says-in Israel-'We just got back from the Middle East.'"

<http://bit.ly/2rNfw4w>

...

... @aarondmiller2: "In knowing [and] working with Netanyahu for decades, never -- and I mean never -- have I seen him so relaxed in presence of a US president." ...

@robertdanin: "Commentators on @Channel2News repeatedly referring to Ivanka Trump by her Hebrew name 'Yael'. Israelis seem to see her as family."

-- After departing Bethlehem, **DONALD TRUMP** went back to the hotel, and then to Yad V'Shem, Israel's Holocaust museum. He is going to give a speech at the Israel Museum in the 7 a.m. hour on the East coast. He is then scheduled to depart for Rome.

THE PRIZE FIGHT CONTINUES: NYT and WAPO's LATEST SCOOPS ...

-- **"Trump asked intelligence chiefs to push back against FBI collusion probe after Comey revealed its existence,"** by WaPo's Adam Entous and Ellen Nakashima:

"President Trump asked two of the nation's top intelligence officials in March to help him push back against an FBI investigation into possible coordination between his campaign and the Russian government, according to current and former officials. Trump made separate appeals to the director of national intelligence, Daniel Coats, and to Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the director of the [NSA], urging them to publicly deny the existence of any evidence of collusion during the 2016 election. Coats and Rogers refused to comply with the requests, which they both deemed to be inappropriate ...

"The White House does not confirm or deny unsubstantiated claims based on illegal leaks from anonymous individuals,' [an unnamed] White House spokesman said. 'The president will continue to focus on his agenda that he was elected to pursue by the American people.' In addition to the requests to Coats and Rogers, senior White House officials sounded out top intelligence officials about the possibility of intervening directly with Comey to encourage the FBI to drop its probe of Michael Flynn, ... The officials said the White House appeared uncertain about its power to influence the FBI. 'Can we ask him to shut down the investigation? Are you able to assist in this matter?' one official said of the line of questioning from the White House." <http://wapo.st/2qe2nR2>

-- **NYT A1, "Michael Flynn Misled Pentagon About His Russia Ties, Letter Says,"** by Mark Mazzetti and Matt Rosenberg: "Mr. Flynn ... told investigators in February 2016 that he had received no income from foreign companies and had only 'insubstantial contact' with foreign nationals ... In fact, Mr. Flynn had sat two months earlier beside President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia at a Moscow gala for RT, the Kremlin-financed television network, which paid Mr. Flynn more than \$45,000 to attend the event and give a separate speech. His failure to make those disclosures and his apparent attempt to mislead the Pentagon could put Mr. Flynn in further legal jeopardy. Intentionally lying to federal investigators is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison."

<http://nyti.ms/2qQybx3> ... **The letter** <http://bit.ly/2q6oVrq>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)** One in two Americans rely on their employers for health care benefits including affordable access to prescription drugs. That's why employers are partnering with PBMs to provide

access to effective medications at the most affordable price and improve health outcomes. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

TRUMP'S BUDGET OUT TODAY -- "Trump's budget hits his own voters hardest :

The president's proposal for next year's federal spending calls for more than \$1 trillion in cuts to social programs, including farm aid," by Andrew Restuccia, Matt Nussbaum and Sarah Ferris: "Rather than breaking with Washington precedent, Trump's spending blueprint follows established conservative orthodoxy, cutting taxes on the wealthy, boosting defense spending and taking a hatchet to programs for the poor and disabled -- potentially hurting many of the rural and low-income Americans that voted him into office. ...

"The president's budget plan calls for more than \$1 trillion in cuts to a wide range of social programs with millions of beneficiaries, from farm subsidies to federal student aid. That includes a \$600 billion cut to Medicaid over 10 years, despite Trump's repeated promises on the campaign trail not to cut the program. The budget also takes an ax to the federal food stamp program and Social Security Disability Insurance.

"Trump also proposes some of the deepest cuts to agriculture subsidies since Ronald Reagan, squeezing out nearly \$50 billion over 10 years. Trump's budget would drastically cut domestic programs controlled by Congress, slashing \$1.7 trillion over 10 years. At the end of the decade, the U.S. would spend nearly twice as much on defense as on other domestic programs. Domestic discretionary spending would be capped at \$429 billion per year, below 2004 levels, while military spending soars to \$722 billion." <http://politi.co/2qRmxlF>

-- THE REALITY ABOUT BUDGETS... -- This budget -- like President Barack Obama's budget before it -- is dead on arrival on Capitol Hill. But it does represent a negotiating point for the administration as they pursue other budgeting priorities. That being said, we believe it's going to be difficult for the House and Senate to pass a budget this year, which could stall -- or stop -- tax reform.

FLYNN WATCH -- "Burr: Flynn could be held in contempt," by Austin Wright and Burgess Everett: "Senate Intelligence Chairman Richard Burr is not ruling out holding Michael Flynn in contempt of Congress as President Donald Trump's former national security adviser continues to stonewall Congress. Flynn's lawyer informed the Intelligence panel Monday that Flynn would not honor a subpoena for a list of his interactions with Russian officials in the run-up to last year's presidential election.

"And the North Carolina Republican said his committee has 'plenty' of options to respond. 'You'll just have to wait and watch. [Contempt is] certainly one of the avenues that we could pursue,' Burr told three reporters on Monday evening. 'It does us no good to have people insist on pleading the Fifth if you're out trying to get information. The only thing I can tell you is immunity is off the table.'" <http://politi.co/2rOcxZz>

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE -- "Trump close to choosing outside counsel for

Russia investigation," by WaPo's Bob Costa and Ashley Parker: "The attorneys who have spoken to the White House and who are seen as the finalists are Marc E. Kasowitz; Robert J. Giuffra Jr.; Reid H. Weingarten; and Theodore B. Olson ... Two other attorneys who were originally viewed as contenders but have since drifted away from the mix, at least momentarily, because of legal or professional obstacles are Brendan V. Sullivan Jr. of Williams & Connolly and A.B. Culvahouse Jr. ... Kasowitz, who has known Trump for decades, is expected to take a leading role. A partner at Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman in New York, Kasowitz has represented Trump in numerous cases, including on his divorce records, real estate transactions and allegations of fraud at Trump University." <http://wapo.st/2rJFIxW>

THE INVESTIGATION -- "Mueller briefed on secret Comey memos, source says," by CNN's Pamela Brown and Shimon Prokupecz: "Additionally, he has already visited FBI headquarters, where he met with the counterintelligence agents who have been working on the case since last July, according to two people familiar with the matter." <http://cnn.it/2qb2BJj>

-- **@NBCNews:** "JUST IN: Former Trump associates Paul Manafort and Roger Stone have turned over documents to Senate Intel Committee, source tells NBC News"

NEW SHERIFFS AT 1600? "Trump eyeing Lewandowski, Bossie as crisis managers," by Eliana Johnson and Josh Dawsey: "The White House is looking to wall off the scandals threatening to overtake the president's agenda by building a separate crisis management operation. President Donald Trump personally reached out to two of his former campaign aides -- his first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, and his deputy campaign manager, David Bossie -- to sound them out about working with the administration as crisis managers, according to two people familiar with the situation. ... The scope and complexity of independent investigations has typically proved a challenge for regular White House staffers, who have struggled to juggle them with their day-to-day duties, and veterans of previous administrations say creating an independent operation can relieve some of the pressure on the press office." <http://politi.co/2q4DT1v>

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "Ryan bucks White House, setting up clash on taxes," by Rachael Bade: "Paul Ryan and the White House are barreling toward a tax reform show-down -- a faceoff that's becoming all but inevitable as the speaker continues selling a tax plan rejected by Trump officials. At issue is a controversial pillar of the House GOP tax plan that effectively hikes taxes on imports.

"Top administration officials from Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to chief economic adviser Gary Cohn have warned the speaker that they're not exactly fans of the so-called border adjustment tax -- hoping Ryan would take a hint and change direction. But the Wisconsin Republican is refusing to back off, arguing in recent days that it's 'the smart way to go.' And over the weekend, his key ally on the matter, Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas), began circulating talking points encouraging panel members to sell the scheme." <http://politi.co/2rcprEx> ... **The talking points** <http://politi.co/2qQhvaZ>

-- **THIS IS EXACTLY THE TYPE OF INTERNAL DIVISION** Mnuchin and other top White House officials have been trying to avoid. Mnuchin has spent weeks meeting with Republicans and even some Democrats on Capitol Hill and on K Street as he's tried to build consensus and good will for a major tax reform bill. With the border adjustment tax all but dead in the Senate, it's unclear what Ryan's endgame strategy is as he continues to push the measure that is also fairly unpopular within his own ranks.

SNEAK PEEK -- PROPUBLICA'S ALEC MACGILLIS in NYT MAGAZINE: "Jared Kushner's Other Real Estate Empire : Baltimore-area renters complain about a property owner who they say neglects their homes and often sues when they leave. Few of them know the landlord is the president's son-in-law": "[A]mid the high-profile Manhattan and Brooklyn purchases, in 2011, Kushner Companies, with Jared now more firmly in command, pulled together a deal that looked much more like something from the firm's humble past than from its high-rolling present. That June, the company and its equity partners bought 4,681 units of what are known in real estate jargon as 'distress-ridden, Class B' apartment complexes: units whose prices fell somewhere in the middle of the market, typically of a certain age and wear, whose owners were in financial difficulty. The properties were spread across 12 sites in Toledo, Ohio; Pittsburgh; and other Rust Belt cities still reeling from the Great Recession." <http://nyti.ms/2rvUVVO>

THE JUICE ...

-- **BRODERICK JOHNSON** and **ROBERT DOAR** are joining the Path Forward Coalition, a joint project focused on the positive aspects of service industry jobs of the National Restaurant Association and the National Retail Federation, as senior advisers. Potomac West Group runs the coalition's day-to-day operations. Look for Capitol Hill events in mid-June and mid-July.

-- **JESSICA SMITH** started on Monday as chief operating officer at J Street. She previously was managing director within the public affairs and crisis practice at Burson-Marsteller.

LATE-NIGHT BEST -- RACHEL MADDOW on **STEPHEN COLBERT**
<http://bit.ly/2qQ6x5t> ... <http://bit.ly/2qKbaO6> ... **BEN PLATT!** on Colbert.
<http://bit.ly/2qQiQyw> ... <http://bit.ly/2qQbE5H>

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas shakes hands with President Donald Trump after delivering a statement following their meeting in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on May 23. | Nasser Nasser/AP Photo

OFF MESSAGE PODCAST: Will Eric Garcetti throw his hat into the ring for 2020? In the latest episode of Off Message, Isaac Dovey sits down with the mayor of Los Angeles, a city, as Garcetti points out, with four million residents. California is the sixth-largest economy in the world and L.A. has the seventeenth-largest population globally, if it was an independent country. With Garcetti's keynote at the California state Democratic convention next month, many party leaders across the country believe he could be a real contender. ***Listen and subscribe*** <http://apple.co/2nEa7y0>

-- "Eric Garcetti isn't running for president (wink, wink)," by Isaac Dovey:
<http://politi.co/2qK3NWK>

DRAIN THE SWAMP! - NYT A1, "White House Moves to Block Ethics Inquiry Into Ex-Lobbyists on Payroll," by Eric Lipton: "The Trump administration, in a significant escalation of its clash with the government's top ethics watchdog, has moved to block an effort to disclose the names of former lobbyists who have been granted waivers to work in the White House or federal agencies. ... Mr. Shaub returned a scalding, 10-page response to the White House late Monday, unlike just about any correspondence in the history of the office, created after the Nixon Watergate scandal. ... Dozens of former lobbyists and industry lawyers are working in the Trump administration, which has hired them at a much higher rate than the previous administration. Keeping the waivers confidential would make it impossible to know whether any such officials are violating federal ethics rules or have been given a pass to ignore them." <http://nyti.ms/2q56eEU> ... ***Shaub's letter*** <http://bit.ly/2rLHfnc>

--"Amid complicated relations with U.S., Turkey hires longtime Trump lobbyist Brian Ballard," by Florida Playbooker Marc Caputo: "President Donald Trump's longtime Florida lobbyist, Brian Ballard, has expanded his practice globally and just signed a \$1.5 million contract with the government of Turkey, which will be represented by the firm's new big hire, former Florida Congressman Robert Wexler. ... Wexler is new to lobbying and joined Ballard Partners in March. He's still serving as president of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, a Washington-based think tank devoted to Israeli-Palestinian relations." <http://politi.co/2qJpJS9> ... ***Subscribe to Florida Playbook*** <http://politi.co/1OypFe9>

TOP-ED - MONICA LEWINSKY in the NYT, "Roger Ailes's Dream Was My Nightmare": "Mr. Ailes, a former Republican political operative, took the story of the affair and the trial that followed and made certain his anchors hammered it ceaselessly, 24 hours a day. ... John Moody, a Fox executive editor, reflected on that period[:] ... 'Monica was a news channel's dream come true.' Their dream was my nightmare. My character, my looks and my life were picked apart mercilessly. ... My family and I huddled at home, worried about my going to jail - I was the original target of Kenneth Starr's investigation, threatened with 27 years for having been accused of signing a false affidavit and other alleged crimes - or worse, me taking my own life." <http://nyti.ms/2rNf5am>

MICHAEL WOLFF in The Hollywood Reporter, "at Roger Ailes' Funeral: Loyalists Celebrate in an 'Act of Defiance'": "If the liberal media saw Ailes as a disgraced and broken man ... his funeral was meant to be an act of defiance. Without apology, it was a celebration of husband, father, friend, employer, political figure, media titan, TV impresario and, hardly least of all, man of many provocations. ... Most of all the villains were the Murdochs: Rupert Murdoch, who had hired Ailes in 1996, and his sons, James and Lachlan, who had assumed executive authority two years ago. Ailes had given the Murdoch family 20 years and built them a \$30 billion company, and, in the opinion of family, friends and his confidants at Fox, had been sacrificed by them when it suited their purposes. On the day Ailes died, Rupert Murdoch had been advised that a condolence call to Ailes' wife would not be well received. ...

"The funeral two days later was held at Saint Edwards Roman Catholic Church in Palm Beach - the church where Rose Kennedy attended mass every morning when she was at her winter home. Ethel Kennedy, the wife of Robert F. Kennedy, attended the Ailes' service with her son Douglas Kennedy, a long-time Fox News reporter. Along with Limbaugh and Kennedy were Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, Bill Hemmer, Kimberly Guilfoyle and Liz Trotta. There was, too, Dennis Kucinich, the wild card Democratic presidential candidate whom Ailes had befriended, and Pat Caddell, the rogue Democratic political operative who had long bonded with Ailes as rogue Republican operative." <http://bit.ly/2qP1kuE>

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)** As list prices for brand drugs continue to rise, employers are partnering with PBMs to keep drug costs under control. In fact, every dollar an employer invests in a PBM service returns six dollars in savings. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

DEMOCRATIC UNITY? -- "Bernie backers rage over Calif. Democratic Party chair race," by California Playbook Carla Marinucci in San Francisco: "Supporters of the losing candidate in a bitterly disputed election to serve as chair of the California Democratic Party say they'll begin a detailed audit of the votes on Monday. The move comes after protests, allegations of ballot stuffing and bitter disputes after votes at a weekend party convention. Longtime party operative Eric Bauman won the chairmanship of the California Democratic Party over the weekend - but his victory was marred by complaints of ballot-stuffing and floor protests. Backers of the Kimberly Ellis, a favorite of the 'Berniecrat,' activist wing of the party - say efforts to scrutinize the votes will begin immediately." <http://politi.co/2qRdotk> ... **Subscribe to California Playbook** <http://politi.co/2bLvcPI>

AT THE DEPT. OF EDUCATION -- "DeVos says Washington will not mandate 'school choice'," by Caitlin Emma: "Education Secretary Betsy DeVos promised Monday night that the Trump administration would propose 'the most ambitious expansion of education choice in our nation's history,' but said that states, rather than Washington, D.C., would make the decisions. 'When it comes to education, no solution, not even ones we like, should be dictated or run from Washington, D.C.,' she said. DeVos, though, offered scant details about the Trump administration's vision for school

choice." <http://politi.co/2rNTuP2>

DATA DU JOUR -- The Harvard Graduating Class of 2017 by the numbers," by Harvard Crimson's Mariel A. Klein: "A fifth of surveyed seniors reported that the 2016 election results changed their postgraduate career plans in some way. Of those who said the election results changed their plans, 12 percent said they took a job in the public sector instead of the private sector. Another 10 percent reported that they now hope to run for public office. ... Among those who said the election changed their plans, 37 percent said they had been considering jobs in the federal government but decided against pursuing one." <http://bit.ly/2q5a4xD>

HISTORY LESSON -- "That Time the Soviets Bugged Congress, and Other Spy Tales: Allowing a photographer from the Russian state media into the Oval Office was an act of breathtaking recklessness," by Calder Walton in POLITICO Magazine: "During a private meeting [with the Russians] in the Oval Office earlier this month, President Donald Trump ... [barred] U.S. reporters and photographers ... but bizarrely, a photographer from the Russian state-run media agency, TASS, was admitted. ... [T]hough it may seem like a storyline from The Americans, fears that the TASS photographer may have planted an electronic monitoring device in the Oval Office are not as far-fetched as they first seem. In fact, the Kremlin is a past master of planting hidden listening devices in America's most sensitive government buildings. During the Cold War, Soviet intelligence used TASS as cover for espionage, and in one operation, used it to plant a bug at the center of Capitol Hill." <http://politi.co/2qOURQn>

MEDIWATCH -- "Judge won't move libel suit against BuzzFeed over Trump dossier," by Josh Gerstein: "A federal judge has turned down BuzzFeed's request to move a libel suit over its publication of a dossier contained unverified allegations against President Donald Trump. BuzzFeed and its editor-in-chief Ben Smith asked that the case be relocated to New York City, but Miami-based U.S. District Court Judge Ursula Ungaro issued a ruling Monday refusing to give up the case filed by Russian tech executive and entrepreneur Aleksey Gubarev." <http://politi.co/2qbYY5V>

-- **After JAMES SUROWIECKI** left The New Yorker in March, **ADAM DAVIDSON** and **SHEELAH KOLHATKAR** are now writing The Financial Page column in his place, on a rotating basis. Davidson is a staff writer for the magazine and previously was the "On Money" columnist and a contributing writer for the N.Y. Times Magazine and co-founded and co-hosted NPR's "Planet Money." Kolhatkar, author of "Black Edge: Inside Information, Dirty Money and the Quest to Bring Down the Most Wanted Man on Wall Street," is also a staff writer at the magazine and previously was features editor and national correspondent for Bloomberg Businessweek.

-- **Washington Examiner** is launching "Trump's America," a four-year long reporting project that will cover the Trump presidency with long-form reporting in nine counties that helped deliver the election to Trump. Daniel Allott, deputy commentary editor for the Examiner, and his twin brother, documentary filmmaker Jordan Allott, will report from these counties regularly during the Trump presidency. <http://bit.ly/2qbkszK>

Playbookers

<http://bit.ly/2qQq03N>

-- **James Hewitt**, senior director at strategic comms firm Dezenhall Resources and an RNC alum, got engaged to **Cara Read** of Bloomberg Government. He popped the question over champagne and Cabernet Sauvignon in Prague. **Pics** <http://politi.co/2qPcWOu>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - AARON BLAKE, senior political reporter for The Fix at WaPo and **DANIELLE BLAKE**, associate VP for public affairs at AdvaMed, email friends and family: "Wanted to let you know that Aria Marie Blake arrived [Monday] morning at 4:41 a.m., 7 hours before her scheduled c-section (apparently already making her own decisions). She weighed in at 7 lbs and 2 oz, 20.5 inches long. We are totally smitten, as is big brother Grayson." **Pics** <http://politi.co/2q59lqN> ...

<http://politi.co/2qbtVql>

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): Kerry Rom, director of media affairs at the NRCC and a Jeb and Chamber of Commerce alum (hat tip: Emily Benavides)

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: WaPo's **Dana Priest**, Pulitzer Prize winner and the pride of Canoga Park, Calif. How she's celebrating: "In the morning, I'll celebrate my birthday by trying to convince a group of students to get involved in helping journalists imprisoned overseas, my newish passion. Then I'll take a horseback riding lesson as a gift to myself. I'll have dinner in our backyard garden with friends and family." Read her Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2qfl1HX>

BIRTHDAYS: Melanie Fonder Kaye (hat tip: Kelley McCormick) ... William Minor, partner at DLA Piper, is 5-0 (h/t wife Christine Enemark) ... Ilyas Kirmani, senior producer at NBC Nightly News ... ABC News' Mary Bruce (h/t Rachel Adler) ... NBC's Danielle Dellorto, a CNN alum ... Politico's Matt Nussbaum ... Tom Heinemann, VP of federal gov't affairs at the Manufactured Housing Institute, and bro-in-law of Carrie Budoff Brown ... Redeemer Arlington ... Blake Rollins ... Shekar Narasimhan ... CNN's Nate McDermott (h/t K File crew) ... Adam Levy, senior producer at CNN ... Poynter alum Mallary Tenore Tarpley ... devoted Playbooker Megan McKinley, of Sen. Rubio's office, is 23 (h/t Libby Callaway) ... Jacob Gladysz, a CSIS alum and recent graduate of Georgetown University, is 22 (h/t Bill Schuette) ...

... **Anna Gohmann** of Comcast/NBC Universal ... Jerry H. Goldfeder of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP ... Helen Smith (h/t Megan Apper) ... Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.) is 67 ... Adrienne Cisneros-Selekman ... Rachel MacKnight ... Jorge Martinez ... Casey Greenfield ... Entergy's Nick Culp ... Adrienne Cisneros-Selekman ... Rob Keast ... USA Today's Cameron Smith ... Brian Bakst of Minnesota Public Radio News and an AP alum ... Alan Auglis ... John Gonzalez ... Lucy Cook ... Mark Sullivan ... Vivian Graubard ... Georgiana Bloom ... Reuters' Katherina Lemus ... Connie Sammarco ... chess grandmaster Anatoly Karpov is 66 ... Drew Carey is 59 ... "Jeopardy!" champ Ken Jennings is 43 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (CAPD)** One in two Americans rely on their employers to provide health care benefits. So, employers partner with PBMs to provide access to effective medications at the most affordable price. PBMs drive savings in part by using clinical expertise to identify generic alternatives that achieve the same health outcomes for a lower price. With generics accounting for 89 percent of prescriptions filled in 2015, but only 27 percent of drug costs, that represents a savings of \$227 billion across the U.S. health care system in just one year. Learn more at www.affordableprescriptiondrugs.org. *****

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To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings/settings>

This email was sent to wilcox.jahan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: Alexander Nazaryan[a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/1/2017 4:13:05 PM
Subject: Re:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post. Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... "Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA's criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... "We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. "Staff from the EPA's disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to

different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. 'Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,' said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. 'Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.' ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example. 'We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,' Scheraga said. 'They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.' ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. "Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Friedman, Lisa
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:28:37 PM
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office
(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Fimrite, Peter[PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 6:00:13 PM
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

The answers with my names next to them are on the record. The tea leaves is not but let me see if I can get that approved. Does that work?

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the

administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Fri 4/20/2018 12:14:18 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2018

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2018

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2018**

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: CBS

Print: BuzzFeed

EDT

7:30AM Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time

5:20PM THE PRESIDENT hosts a roundtable with Republican National Committee supporters

Palm Beach, FL

Closed Press

###

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Marsh, Rene
Sent: Thur 4/20/2017 8:07:06 PM
Subject: Re:
[removed.txt](#)

Thanks. Nice to meet you by phone. Could you also send statement on pesticides- Dow Company

— René Marsh

CNN

Correspondent

Twitter: @Rene_MarshCNN

Office: 202- 777-7249

From: "Wilcox, Jahan" <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Date: Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 3:50 PM
To: "RENE.MARSH@TURNER.COM" <Rene.Marsh@turner.com>
Subject: <no subject>

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/04/14/stories/1060053120>

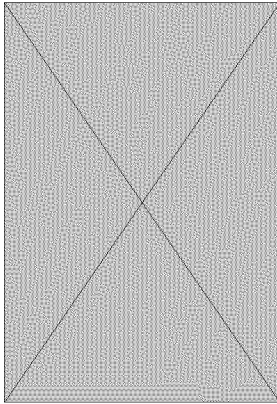
As White House lags on nominees, Pruitt builds his team

Kevin Bogardus, E&E News reporter

Published: Friday, April 14, 2017

Republican congressional and campaign aides are starting to fill out the Trump administration's U.S. EPA roster.

Administrator Scott Pruitt has been steadily building his leadership team while waiting for the White House to offer nominees to fill posts requiring Senate approval. Pruitt is still President Trump's only EPA pick so far.



J.P. Freire. Photo courtesy Freire via LinkedIn.

Here's the EPA lineup so far:

Public affairs

J.P. Freire has joined EPA as associate administrator for public affairs. Freire was communications director for Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) for more than two years, and before that, he served as then-Rep. Mike Pompeo's (R-Kan.) communications director and speechwriter. The Cornell University graduate also has experience in journalism, having spent nearly two years at *The Washington Examiner* as an associate editorial page editor.



Liz Snyder Bowman. Photo courtesy Bowman via LinkedIn.

Also working in EPA's public affairs office is **Liz Snyder Bowman**. She comes to the agency from the American Chemistry Council, where she handled issue and advocacy communications. Snyder Bowman also worked at public affairs firm HDMK and at the Pew Charitable Trusts.

John Konkus, who helped handled press inquiries for Pruitt's confirmation team, is based in the agency's public affairs shop, too. Konkus was a Trump campaign aide as well as a member of the president's EPA "beachhead" team.

Amy Graham has come to EPA as its deputy associate administrator for public engagement. Graham was Sen.

Shelley Moore Capito's (R-W.Va.) deputy communications director and also has experience in the House. She worked on Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign and was a press official for Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R).



Amy Graham. Photo courtesy Graham via LinkedIn.

Jahan Wilcox has joined EPA as a strategic communications adviser. Wilcox has worked on several Republican campaigns, including Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) 2016 White House bid, as well as the Republican National Committee.

Pruitt's press secretary when he was Oklahoma's attorney general, **Lincoln Ferguson**, is also now at EPA as a senior speechwriter and communications adviser.

Congressional relations

Troy Lyons, formerly a Hess Corp. lobbyist, is leading EPA's congressional and intergovernmental relations office (*Greenwire*, March 30).

One of his deputies is **Tate Bennett**. She comes to EPA from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and was a legislative aide on energy and agriculture issues for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).



Aaron Ringel. Photo courtesy Ringel via LinkedIn.

Aaron Ringel will also be joining EPA's congressional and intergovernmental relations shop. He was deputy chief of staff to Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.) and has been legislative director for Pompeo when he served in the House.

Layne Bangerter is part of EPA's congressional and intergovernmental relations team, as well. He was Trump's state campaign director for Idaho and is a former aide to Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho). Bangerter was a beachhead team member, as well.

Kenneth Wagner, a longtime legal associate of the EPA administrator, is a senior adviser for state and regional affairs (*Greenwire*, April 13).

Policy

Samantha Dravis is the agency's policy chief and was one of Pruitt's first hires at EPA.

Brittany Bolen is serving as deputy associate administrator for EPA's policy shop. Bolen was policy counsel for the Senate Republican Policy Committee and before that was majority counsel on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee under then-Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.).

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:43:28 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [mailto:eholden@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

[@emilyhholden](https://www.instagram.com/emilyhholden)

To: Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]
Cc: Freire, JP[Freire.JP@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Sun 3/26/2017 2:10:15 PM
Subject: Re:

Yes. If that is a mistake, my apologies.

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:08 AM, Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov> wrote:

This is from the RNC's tv eyes?

On Mar 26, 2017, at 10:06 AM, EPA Jahan Wilcox <jahanwilcoxepa@gmail.com> wrote:

This Week (ABC) – EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Interview

[http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?PlayClip=FALSE&DTSearch=TRUE&DateTime=03%2F26%](http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?PlayClip=FALSE&DTSearch=TRUE&DateTime=03%2F26%2F2017)

SCOTT PRUITT: george, good morning.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: is the ek tech pif order coming this week?
what will the president be proposing?

PRUITT: george, the president is keeping his promise to the american people. this week. with respect to the executive order coming down on tuesday. the energy independence executive order. we need a pro-groet and pro-environment approach. for too long, we have accepted a narrative that if you're pro-growth, pro-jobs, you're anti--environment. that's not where we have been as a country. we have made tremendous choices on our environment. the executive order will address the past administration's efforts to kill jobs throughout the country.

STEPHANOPOULOS: this order is likely to face legal challenges. coal jobs have been declining for a long time. we heard the president's promise. most of the job loss predates the obama initiative. the biggest drops came over a decade ago. you have about the same number of coal jobs now as you dade decade ago. are you worried that the president is making a promise that he just can't keep?

PRUITT: it's not just the short term, george. it's the long term. the past administration had a very anti-fossil fuel strategy. he's saying we can put people back to work and be pro-environment as well. his clean power plant is likely unlawful. there's been a stay against it. our action starting on tuesday, shortly after the executive order will make sure whatever steps we take in the future will be pro-growth, pro-environment. within the framework of the clean air act. it will be legal.

STEPHANOPOULOS: but will it bring back coal jobs?

PRUITT: i think absolutely it will. it will bring back manufacturing jobs, coal jobs across the country. across the energy sector, we have so much opportunity. the last administration wanted to keep it in the ground. we need to move more independent. this is an opportunity. this past week, the president approved the keystone pipeline. it's transportation issues. the jobs are across the economy.

STEPHANOPOULOS: if the president follows through on this and the opeers reverse vehicle pollution rules, there is no way to stay with the french agreement. the message they, the trump administration is sending to the rest of the world is that they don't believe climate change is serious. it's shocking to see such a degree of ignorance from the united states. your response?

PRUITT: george, we're actually at pre1994 levels right now with respect to our co2 footprint. why is that? largely because of innovation and technology in the coal sector and the natural gas sector. horizontal drilling, much more conversion to natural gas to electricity. not just jobs will be created. it's lower electricity rates for consumers. when you take coal generation facilities, natural gas facilities and put them aside, it's causing double-digit increases across the country. it's not good on the consumer and manufacturing side.

STEPHANOPOULOS: i was asking about the paris climate agreement. don't these initiatives mean the agreement is a dead letter.

PRUITT: the paris accord is nonbinding. it was not a treaty, as such. the clean power plan is not tethered to the paris accords. this is an effort to undo the unlawful approach the previous administration engaged in and do it right going forward. with the mind set of being pro-growth and pro environment.

STEPHANOPOULOS: can we achieve the agreement of the paris climate agreement?

PRUITT: since 1980, a 65% reduction of -- we have done great work as a country striking the balance between jobs and our environment. the past administration took steps that were anti-jobs and growth.

STEPHANOPOULOS: the california acted this week to tighten pollution standards. going in the opposite direction from what president trump is proposing. a headline from yesterday's "new york times." do you plan to let that stand?

PRUITT: what we should be doing. you mentioned the cafe standards. the last week and half, the president and i were in detroit announcing we were going to keep our word as a country to re-evaluate those in april 2018. we ought to focus on fuel efficiency for cars people want to buy. this process of building cars that no one purchases in order to meet these standards that were previously set is counterhelp counterhelpful. people don't buy the new cars. they keep older cars. we'll be evaluating that through april of 2018. the cafe standard and the clean power plant and the executive order sends a message to the american people that we're going to do what we can to produce jobs and growth and be sensitive to the environment and reintroduce common sense into the discussion. you mentioned the paris accord. what was wrong with paris was not just that it was failed to be treated as a treaty. but china and india got away scot-free. they didn't have to take steps until 2030. we penalized ourselves through lost jobs while china and india didn't take steps to address the issue internationally. paris was just a bad deal, in my estimation. but, we're trying to focus on getting things right here domestically. operating within the framework of the clean air act.

STEPHANOPOULOS: thank you for your time this trump

To: Alex Guillen[aguillen@politico.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 12:25:50 PM
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

So you include half the story (Carper's story) but not the other half (EPA's story) that we've received to 11 of the 20 letters and that 7 of the past 9 are under 30 days.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrat-tom-carper-wont-support-trumps-epa-nominee-because-he-says-scott-pruitt-is-a-bad-penpal/article/2625486>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 5:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. Ed Markey is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat Tom Carper told ME he met with

Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning vote on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually package Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is a getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA rounded up compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

If you go: The hearing starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then heads to a Senate Appropriations subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to

be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction [here](#).

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has [proposed](#) to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its [Cooperative Federalism 2.0](#) approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy argues in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released an analysis finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state

efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. [Dan Kildee](#) holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a [new report](#) today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior [launched](#) a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website [here](#) (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership

Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

— Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. [Houston Chronicle](#).

— Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. [API](#).

— TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. [Bismarck Tribune](#).

— Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. [Des Moines Register](#).

— BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The Methanol Policy Forum](#)," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee [hearing](#) on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success](#)," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org

11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov

11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

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Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-

file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a letter to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials instructed government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance memo that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and

they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

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Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's [preliminary recommendations](#) to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

To view online [click here](#).

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Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation

that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report [recommended](#) Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. [Orrin Hatch](#) (R-Utah) in a tweeted [video](#) said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

To view online [click here](#).

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Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the plan it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

To view online [click here](#).

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Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists wrote that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, arguing as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to defend globalization and to protect the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO2 emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it cancelled 85 new coal fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have exceeded China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and

regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China invested \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also ranks first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016, in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO2 cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO2 on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO2 emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO2 emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO2 as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of almost 800 million tons per year, more than German's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO2 contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2 degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon [leapt into the public eye](#) Monday morning via reports from security

firms Dragos and ESET. Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a little-noticed cyberattack on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 digital strike on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to [a summary report](#). But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload,

the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado warned may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an

Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird, since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

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Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by CTIA

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Driving the Day

Good Thursday morning. STOP US IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE: PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, CHUCK SCHUMER AND NANCY PELOSI walk into a Chinese dinner on Pennsylvania Avenue....

LET'S GO OVER THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ...

-- **THE DINNER:** The White House served Trump, Schumer and Pelosi Chinese food at a rectangular table in the Blue Room of the White House. Trump sat at the head, flanked by Pelosi on the right and Schumer on the left. Eleven people attended the dinner -- all men besides Pelosi. They talked about China trade issues, in addition to immigration policy.

-- **AROUND 9:30 LAST NIGHT**, the White House put out a statement about the dinner, saying the president had a "constructive working dinner with Senate and House Minority Leaders, Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi as well as administration officials to discuss policy and legislative priorities. These topics included tax reform, border security, DACA, infrastructure and trade."

-- **AT ROUGHLY 9:45**, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer's offices put out a statement saying that **PRESIDENT TRUMP** agreed to quickly "enshrine the protections of DACA into law" with "a package of border security excluding the wall, that's acceptable to both sides." **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS** sent a bulletin at 9:52 p.m. saying a deal had been cut. A source briefed on the meeting told us around 10 p.m. that the "President and the leaders agreed to pair the bipartisan DREAM Act with some border security, excluding the wall."

-- **BEHIND THE SCENES**, Washington started to explode. The White House legislative affairs team was sending text messages and emails to Republican Hill staff, saying the president had only agreed to work on fixing DACA soon. He didn't give up on the wall funding, but the White House conceded he said he wouldn't insist it be part of this package.

-- **THE KIND-OF-SORT-OF PRESIDENTIAL PUSHBACK: TRUMP TWEETED at 6:11 a.m.** : "No deal was made last night on DACA. Massive border security would have to be agreed to in exchange for consent. Would be subject to vote." ... **at 6:20 a.m.:**"The WALL, which is already under construction in the form of new renovation of old and existing fences and walls, will continue to be built." ...

... **at 6:28 a.m.:** "Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!....." ... **at 6:35 a.m.:** "...They have been in our country for many years through no fault of their own - brought in by parents at young age. Plus BIG border security"

... **NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT THIS MEANS...**

-- **WAS THERE EVER A DEAL? ARE THEY CLOSE TO A DEAL?** Only time will tell. And what's a deal mean, anyway? Neither side put out any specifics. Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell are the leaders of the Republican majority, so if you want something done, you need to conduct business with them. As McConnell told the NYT's Carl Hulse earlier this week: "One of the advantages of being the majority leader is you control the paper." That's well put, and very true. The minority has ways to try to force votes, but if you're in the minority, you don't have a say of what gets onto the House or Senate floor, by and large. And Republicans were already complaining the Trump had handed over the governing keys to Democrats.

-- **YES, REPUBLICANS WERE BLINDSIDED.** Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell were not part of this discussion. Ryan sat down with Democrats Wednesday to try to begin to discuss this deal. They didn't make much progress. **See Heather Caygle and John Bresnahan's story for more** <http://politi.co/2h4y1xM> Then Pelosi and Schumer went to the White House and tried to make some progress. A senior Democratic aide told us last night that it's incumbent on the White House to coordinate with Hill Republicans and keep them in the loop.

-- **THIS IS A SMART MOVE FOR DEMS.** It ratchets up pressure on the GOP leadership to do something.

-- **CONSERVATIVES ARE ALREADY WORRIED.** Jake was texting late into the night with Hill sources of all stripes. Conservatives are particularly worried. One particularly plugged in aide pointed out that conservatives ditched Trump on health care once, and immigration is much more of a sacred cow than Obamacare. "If it's weak at all they'll flip ... [I]f it's the typical give a little more \$ to ICE and call it a day they will revolt." **THE REAL STICKING POINT:** Can Republicans and Democrats agree what "real" border

security is?

IOWA REPUBLICAN STEVE KING came out almost immediately against any deal. King tweeted: "@RealDonaldTrump If AP is correct, Trump base is blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair. No promise is credible." ... **CHUCK GRASSLEY**: "@realDonaldTrump Morn news says u made deal w Schumer on DACA/hv ur staff brief me/ I know u undercut JudiCimm effort 4 biparty agreement" ... **See Bob Costa's story from late last night** <http://wapo.st/2fjLamm>

-- ANY DEAL ON DACA COULD BE A PROBLEM FOR REPUBLICAN LEADERS.

John Boehner and Eric Cantor were thrown to the wolves a few years ago for even toying with some sort of immigration reform package. Paul Ryan promised conservatives when he won the speakership in 2015 that he would not pursue and immigration package unless it had the support of the majority of Republicans. That means whatever deal Trump cut -- or will cut -- with Schumer and Pelosi needs to have the support of 121 House Republicans. **REMEMBER**: Paul Ryan is *always* under the threat of an immediate referendum vote of his speakership. Immigration isn't like touching the third rail. It's like hugging an electrified pole while wearing soaking wet clothing.

-- THE REGULAR ORDER ISSUE. Republicans are notoriously uneven when it comes to putting bills through the committee process, but conservatives -- and even GOP leaders -- will say that something this significant has to go through the committees, not get crafted over crispy beef at the White House. McConnell has privately promised senators that this kind of deal would go through the committee process.

THE TIME ISSUE. Republicans have until March to get this done. They'll want to take time to get this right. But if this drags on until March, it will slow the rest of their agenda.

IT'S WORTH NOTING -- It can't be overstated: this isn't how Washington usually works. A Republican president cutting out his own party's leadership on a politically sensitive issue to work directly with Democrats is unheard of and would otherwise be considered politically perilous. We bet that this will get hashed out between Ryan, Pelosi, McConnell and Schumer at some point in the next few months.

HOW IT PLAYED -- NYT: "Democrats Say Trump Agreed to Make Deal on 'Dreamers'" <http://nyti.ms/2fkobaZ> ... **WAPO**: "Trump, top Democrats agree to work on deal to save 'dreamers' from deportation" <http://wapo.st/2x162GM> ... **WSJ**: "Trump, Democrats Shape Agreement to Protect 'Dreamers'" <http://on.wsj.com/2h4w5ZT>

BREITBART HEADLINE -- "AMNESTY DON" <http://bit.ly/2wc40GI>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry**: The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture.

Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

TRUMP'S NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN -- "Moderate Republicans quietly form working group to craft immigration plan," by Seung Min Kim and Rachael Bade:

"Moderate House Republicans angling for a legislative fix to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program have quietly created an informal working group to try and craft an immigration plan that could pass Congress, according to GOP sources.

"The lawmakers have met off and on for months. But it was in anticipation of President Donald Trump's eventual decision last week to phase out the Obama-era executive action that granted hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants work permits and deportation protections, said one person familiar with the group's workings. Now that Trump has made his DACA decision official, the group will be meeting more frequently.

"Republicans who have engaged in the casual talks include Reps. Carlos Curbelo and Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida; Jeff Denham and David Valadao of California, Mark Amodei of Nevada and Dan Newhouse of Washington, among other lawmakers. The GOP leadership is aware of these discussions, although it's not a group led by Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) nor his top deputies." <http://politi.co/2x1G7Pj>

WHAT TRUMP DID TWEET ABOUT LAST NIGHT -- @realDonaldTrump at 10:47 p.m.: "Crooked Hillary Clinton blames everybody (and every thing) but herself for her election loss. She lost the debates and lost her direction!" ... **at 10:52 p.m.:** "The 'deplorables' came back to haunt Hillary. They expressed their feelings loud and clear. She spent big money but, in the end, had no game!"

MEANWHILE, AT THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY ... -- VP MIKE PENCE hosted a dinner of his own ... with Republicans! **IN ATTENDANCE:** House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (N.C.), Reps. Jim Jordan (Ohio), Andy Barr (Ky.), Liz Cheney (Wyo.), Bob Goodlatte (Va.), Andy Harris (Md.), Vicky Hartzler (Mo.), French Hill (Ark.), Gary Palmer (Ala.), Jason Smith (Mo.) and Mark Walker (N.C.).

MUELLER UPDATE -- "Mueller Probe Has 'Red-Hot' Focus on Social Media, Officials Say," by Bloomberg's Chris Strohm: "Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, a North Carolina Republican, said Tuesday that it's 'probably more a question of when' than if there will be a hearing with Facebook officials as part of his panel's probe. Mark Warner, the committee's top Democrat and a former telecommunications company founder, said Facebook's revelation appears to be 'the tip of the iceberg. I think there's going to be much more.' 'This is the Wild, Wild West,' Warner said." <https://bloom.bg/2y0U6UM>

-- "Trump Administration Launches Broad New Anti-Leak Program," by BuzzFeed's Chris Geidner: "The top US national security official has directed government departments and agencies to warn employees across the entire federal government next week about the dangers and consequences of leaking even

unclassified information. ...

"The latest move is a dramatic step that could greatly expand what type of leaks are under scrutiny and who will be scrutinized. In the memo about leaks that was subsequently obtained by BuzzFeed News, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster details a request that 'every Federal Government department and agency' hold a one-hour training next week on 'unauthorized disclosures' - of classified and certain unclassified information." <http://bzfd.it/2eXINGI>

TREASURY SECRETARIES ARE JUST LIKE US... "Treasury Secretary Mnuchin asked for government jet for honeymoon," by Henry C. Jackson and Josh Dawsey: "Treasury Sec. Steve Mnuchin asked for a military jet to take him and his wife, actress Louise Linton, on their European honeymoon earlier this summer, the Treasury Department confirmed on Wednesday. ABC News, citing anonymous sources, first reported that Mnuchin put the request in writing and that it led to an 'inquiry' by the Treasury Department's Office of Inspector General. Mnuchin and Linton traveled to Scotland, France and Italy after their late-June wedding.

"The request for a military plane was eventually deemed unnecessary after further consideration. A Treasury Department spokesman released a statement Wednesday evening acknowledging that Mnuchin had requested the jet, but said the secretary had done so because he wanted to maintain secure communications during extended travel." <http://politi.co/2war74n> ... **The ABC story** <http://abcn.ws/2x3negl>

-- **MNUCHIN** speaks to Ben White at the POLITICO Pro Policy Summit today. <http://politi.co/2xArUvZ>

ESSENTIAL READING -- DIFFERENT SONG SHEET ALERT -- "GOP to Release Tax Overhaul as Trump Says Rich Won't Benefit: Republicans prepare for legislative sprint on a plan they expect would cut taxes for the wealthy," by WSJ's Rich Rubin: "President Donald Trump said Wednesday the emerging Republican tax proposal won't cut taxes for the wealthy, and they may go up, an assurance that appeared to contradict the plan that his administration and GOP leaders are drafting.

"Mr. Trump, speaking before a meeting with a bipartisan group of House members, said he expects wealthy Americans 'will not be gaining at all' under the tax overhaul he wants Congress to pass with a view toward creating new jobs and helping middle-class taxpayers. 'The wealthy will be pretty much where they are,' Mr. Trump, a Republican, said. 'If we can do that, we'd like it. If they have to go higher, they'll go higher, frankly.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2x3KriL>

-- **COUNTDOWN: A MAXIMUM OF 15 DAYS** until the Big Six is slated to release its tax plan, and the president is saying something that flies directly in the face of what his aides and Hill leaders are drafting.

TRUMP'S THURSDAY -- THE PRESIDENT is going to Florida this morning. He flies to

Fort Myers, and goes to Naples. When he gets back to D.C. he hosts a reception and dinner for the White House Historical Association.

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED:** Ivanka and Jared having dinner with Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and his wife Heidi at a corner table at Fiola Mare last night.

-- **SEAN SPICER** on **JIMMY KIMMEL** last night -- From the show: "Sean talks about Donald Trump's tweeting, his Inauguration crowd size, fake news, Melissa McCarthy's impersonation of him, Anthony Scaramucci and more." ***YouTube video of the full interview*** <http://bit.ly/2f7GN19>

-- **AMB. BOB KIMMITT** and **DAVID MCCORMICK** hosted a book party for **RAY DALIO** last night at the Metropolitan Club for his new book "Principles: Life and Work." ***\$18 on Amazon*** <http://amzn.to/2x1quaF> ... ***NYT's Sunday Business cover story "Bridgewater's Ray Dalio Spreads His Gospel of 'Radical Transparency'"*** <http://nyti.ms/2eXtZGO>

SPOTTED: Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Gary Cohn, Wilbur Ross, HR McMaster and Katie McMaster, Dina Powell, Reed and Maggie Cordish, Chris and Renee Lidell, Rob Porter, Jeremy Katz, Josh Raffel, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Heidi Cruz, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Katherine Bradley, Wolf Blitzer, Steve Case, Amb. Jeanne Johnson Phillips, Jack Oliver, Marc Esper, Juleanna Glover, Tom Nides, Matt Schlapp, Richard Fontaine, Eric Cantor, Tom Donilon, Bruce Mehlman, Marcus Brauchli, John McConnell, Tony Fratto, Anne Marie Hauser, Margaret Carlson, Julie and Wynn Radford, Amy Little Thomas, Marc Lampkin, Steve Clemons, Jeff Mason, Nihal Krishan, Wayne Berman, David Urban, Anton Vuljaj, Fred Ryan, Jim and Autumn VandeHei, Mike Allen, Jonathan Swan, Kristen Silverberg and Paul Lettow.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Sen. Bill Cassidy (left) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (right) fist bump each other during a news conference on Capitol Hill on Sept. 13 to unveil legislation to reform health care. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

JOE BIDEN ALERT! -- "Joe Biden: Reclaiming America's Values"
<http://nyti.ms/2y9KU1o>

BIG SCOOP -- CNN'S "MOSCOW" MANU RAJU -- "Exclusive: Rice told House investigators why she unmasked senior Trump officials": "Former national security

adviser Susan Rice privately told House investigators that she unmasked the identities of senior Trump officials to understand why the crown prince of the United Arab Emirates was in New York late last year, multiple sources told CNN.

"The New York meeting preceded a separate effort by the UAE to facilitate a back-channel communication between Russia and the incoming Trump White House. The crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, arrived in New York last December in the transition period before Trump was sworn into office for a meeting with several top Trump officials, including Michael Flynn, the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and his top strategist Steve Bannon, sources said." <http://cnn.it/2wYQICr>

SCOOP -- "Trump ethics watchdog moves to allow anonymous gifts to legal defense funds," by Darren Samuelsohn: "The U.S. Office of Government Ethics has quietly reversed its own internal policy prohibiting anonymous donations from lobbyists to White House staffers who have legal defense funds. The little-noticed change could help President Donald Trump's aides raise the money they need to pay attorneys as the Russia probe expands - but raises the potential for hidden conflicts of interest or other ethics trouble. 'You can picture a whole army of people with business before the government willing to step in here and make [the debt] go away,' said Marilyn Glynn, a former George W. Bush-era acting OGE director who worked in the office for 17 years." <http://politi.co/2y0QQZF>

ISRAEL, CHINA, OPIOIDS AND NOW PRISONS -- "Kushner to gather bipartisan group to come up with ideas for federal prisons," by WaPo's Beth Reinhard: "President Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, will convene a roundtable Thursday at the White House to gather recommendations for improving mentoring and job training in federal prisons, a departure from the administration's focus on more punitive crime-fighting measures. A bipartisan group of about two dozen elected officials, religious leaders and business leaders were invited to the first major criminal justice-related event held by the Kushner-led Office of American Innovation, which in recent months has brought together technology executives to search for ways to make government more efficient. ...

"There is a lot of agreement from the left and the center and the right that once a person has committed a crime we should make sure we give them the best opportunities to try to live a productive life after serving their time," Kushner told The Washington Post in a telephone interview. "We're not looking to train better criminals." <http://wapo.st/2y0ancC>

JARED and IVANKA speak to the FT's Courtney Weaver for a cover feature for the weekend magazine -- "I will not be distracted by the noise" - Ivanka on her ability to change her father's policies: "Some people have created unrealistic expectations of what they expect from me. That my presence in and of itself would carry so much weight with my father that he would abandon his core values and the agenda that the American people voted for when they elected him. It's not going to happen. To those critics, shy of turning my father into a liberal, I'd be a failure to them."

--On why she so rarely publicly criticizes her father: "To voice dissent publicly would mean I'm not part of the team. When you're part of a team, you're part of a team. That doesn't mean everyone in the White House has homogeneous views -- we don't, and I think that's good and healthy -- but that doesn't mean we're publicly undermining [each other] and this administration." <http://on.ft.com/2h5ON3n>

MORE KUSHNER DRAMA -- "Kushner's White House role 'crushed' efforts to woo investors for NYC tower," by WaPo's Michael Kranish and Jonathan O'Connell: "Jared Kushner and his family company seemed close to striking a deal in 2016 to transform their aging, money-losing 41-story Manhattan office tower into a new and profitable Fifth Avenue skyscraper twice as tall. A team led by Kushner and his father, Charles, courted global investors and prospective tenants. Then Donald Trump became president and Kushner became his father-in-law's senior White House adviser. Problems ensued. ...

"They were crushed by this," said Thomas Barrack, a friend of Trump and Kushner's and former project investor. Kushner's move to the White House 'just about completely chilled the market, and [potential investors] just said, "No way - can't be associated with any appearances of conflict of interest," even though there was none.' Laurent Morali, who became president of Kushner Cos. last year, said in an interview that he is marketing a 60-year-old aluminum-clad building 'that is not competitive' with more-modern properties. He said the company will decide soon whether to proceed with its ambitious redevelopment plan or scale back." <http://wapo.st/2jpstll>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

DAVID REMNICK interviews **HILLARY CLINTON** for The New Yorker - "Hillary Clinton Looks Back in Anger: She talks about Trump, Comey, collusion, 'deplorables,' and the power of sexism": "I think the President and his Administration pose a clear and present danger to our democracy ... I hoped, back on the day after that election, that I wouldn't be sitting here, all these months later, feeling compelled to say that with a sense of urgency. But I am, and I do." ...

President Trump is "being played by the Putins and the Kim Jong Uns of the world. I'm not even sure he's aware of that. Because he has such a limited understanding of the world. Everything is in relation to how it makes him feel. And therefore he has little objective distance, which a leader must have. ... I think Trump has behaved in a

deplorable manner, both during his campaign and as President ... I think he has given permission to others to engage in deplorable behavior, as we did see in Charlottesville and elsewhere. So I don't take back the description that I made of him and a number of his core supporters." ...

"Mitch McConnell, in what I think of as a not only unpatriotic but despicable act of partisan politics, made it clear that if the Obama Administration spoke publicly about what they knew, he would accuse them of partisan politics, of trying to tip the balance toward me ... McConnell basically threatened the White House."

Two other quotes from the interview -- her view of the Obama Administration's response to Russian hacking, she said, "I think we were mushy." ... What it was like to write the book: "Literally, at times when I was writing it, I had to go lie down ... I just couldn't bear to relive it." <http://bit.ly/2xANvEt> ... ***The cover, titled "The First" and by Malika Favre, is what the New Yorker would have published had Clinton won*** <http://bit.ly/2eWKEdz>

UPDATE -- "Anthony Weiner Says His Actions 'Crushed the Aspirations of My Wife'," by NYT's Benjamin Weiser: "Lawyers for Anthony D. Weiner, the former Democratic congressman whose lewd text exchanges with a teenage girl led to his prosecution and embroiled him in an F.B.I. investigation of Hillary Clinton before the presidential election, asked a judge on Wednesday night to spare him a prison sentence.

"In asking that Mr. Weiner receive probation , his lawyers described his behavior as 'inexcusable,' but cited his 'remarkable progress' over the past year. Mr. Weiner, 53, writing separately to the judge, cited his 'profound' regret for endangering the well-being of the girl, whom he understood to be 15. He added, 'My continued acting out over years crushed the aspirations of my wife and ruined our marriage.' And, he said, his young son 'will forever have to answer questions about the public and private failings of his father.' ... Prosecutors are expected to make their sentencing recommendation next week. The office of Joon H. Kim, the acting United States attorney in Manhattan, said in Mr. Weiner's plea agreement that a sentence in the range of 21 to 27 months would be 'fair and appropriate.'" <http://nyti.ms/2y0tXp5>

PORTMAN PROFILE -- "How An Old-Fashioned Senator Is Living In Donald Trump's Washington," by BuzzFeed's Henry J. Gomez: "Asked how he learns about President Donald Trump's disruptive and frequently combative tweets, the Ohio Republican grinned. 'I get it two ways,' he began, as he rose from a chair in his office. He walked behind his desk and grabbed his iPhone. 'I can't follow everybody, right? But guess who I do follow? Donald Trump,' Portman continued as he returned to his seat. 'So every one of his tweets, I get on my phone. I have an alert,' Portman confirmed as he tapped away at the screen. 'You know why? Because when I didn't have an alert, I would be in the middle of an interview with someone like you, and they would ask me about something he tweeted, and I would be caught flat-footed.'" <http://bzfd.it/2jqs3vw>

NARAL's ILYSE HOGUE: 'WE ARE VERY, VERY PLEASED' by single-payer bill.

The abortion-rights advocate tells POLITICO's Dan Diamond that guaranteed coverage of abortion and contraception is a major step from Democrats' approach even eight years ago. "We think the Sanders bill positions reproductive health care right where it's supposed to be ... a non-negotiable part of a health care system where everybody's needs are covered. I think that's a huge achievement. We went from a Stupak amendment that nearly derailed [reproductive] health care in 2009 ... [to] the whole host of reproductive health care that we know helps women thrive." <http://bit.ly/2eWVKzh>

MEDIAWATCH -- Tom LoBianco is joining the AP's Washington bureau starting Monday. He rejoins AP from CNN. LoBianco previously worked for the AP as a politics reporter in Indiana.

TV TODAY -- CHUCK TODD is joining former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands of St. Thomas and St. John to survey the damage caused by Hurricane Irma and provide help. Some of the interview will air Friday on MSNBC's "MTP Daily," with more on Sunday's "Meet the Press."

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Boris Epshteyn at the Capital Grille last night -- *pic* <http://bit.ly/2h3BJHM> ... Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) was also at the Capital Grille, having dinner with some El Paso county commissioners

OUT AND ABOUT - NADEAM ELSHAMI FAREWELL - Pool report: "The best quote from the farewell party for outgoing Chief of Staff to Nancy Pelosi, Nadeam Elshami was when he recalled his goal for working on Capitol Hill sarcastically, 'when starting on Capitol Hill my mission was to sit behind a member on the floor so I could be on C-Span.'"

SPOTTED: House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), as well as Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass., House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Democratic Reps. Joe Crowley (N.Y.), John Conyers (Mich.), John Sarbanes (Md.), Debbie Dingell (Mich.), Elijah Cummings (Md.), Nita Lowey (N.Y.), Brendan Boyle (Pa.), Michelle Lujan-Grisham (N.M.), Brad Schneider (Ill.), David Cicilline (R.I.), Carolyn Maloney (N.Y.), Pete Aguilar (Calif.), Louise Slaughter (N.Y.), Ben Ray Lujan (N.M.), Maxine Waters (Calif.), Bennie Thompson (Miss.), Barbara Lee (Calif.), Earl Blumenauer (Ore.), Barbara Jackson Lee (Calif.) and Jared Polis (Colo.) ...

... **Jennifer Palmieri, Izzy Klein, Tom Kahn, Steve Elmendorf, Peter Karafotas, Paul Tencher, Yebbie Watkins, Matt Gelman, Brad Wolters, John Michael Gonzalez and Todd Schulte.** Pelosi alumni Paula Short, Brendan Daly, Jon Stivers, Alexandra Veitch, Melinda Medlin, Jerry Hartz, Jonathan Powell, Kelly Berens, Michael Bloom and Anne

Cannon MacMillan, Tom Manatos and new Pelosi chief of staff, Danny Weiss.

--**Last night IGI and The Lenzner Firm** hosted their annual rooftop reception.

SPOTTED: Kelly Collis, Brendan Sullivan, Tamera Luzzatto, Sally Bedell Smith, Amb. Jim Jones, Nan Aron, David Letter, Erick Mullen, Richard Scott, James Crowell, Francis Creighton, Emily Lenzner, Mike Dorning, Matea Gold, Tom Hamburger, Ros Halderman, Puneet Talwar, Jason Gross, Chris Todd, Andrew Kline, Marti Thomas and of course Jon Lenzner.

--**Pool report: "Hill staffers and Nashville's finest met** for the [National Music Publishers Association's] annual songwriter showcase on the 101 Constitution Rooftop last night. Bayou soul singer-songwriter Marc Broussard performed as did Nashville singer-songwriter Ryan Kinder. The event reminded attendees of what songwriters are up against in the Digital Age and advocated policy reforms that would help them be paid properly by streaming services."

SPOTTED: David Israelite, Danielle Aguirre, Charlotte Sellmyer, Cary Sherman, Mitch Glazier, Reps. John Conyers and Ted Deutsch, Brendan Belair, Jennifer Lackey, Brendan Shields, Tyler Grimm, Alec French, Paul Overstreet and Mark Bryan.

ENGAGED - Dan Diamond, Politico Pulse author and host of the "Pulse Check" podcast, recently got engaged to **Alicia Daugherty**, a managing director at the Advisory Board Company. "We met through work, at the Advisory Board Company. After years of friendship, I made the first move, and Alicia eventually deemed me to be boyfriend material." **How he proposed:** "We were in New Mexico, where my family has ties, and went off on an adventure that combined a hike, a spa, an inn and Alicia's favorite movie series - Indiana Jones. After Alicia said yes, I surprised her with airplane tickets to her hometown in Minnesota, so we could celebrate with her family too." **Pic**
<http://politi.co/2fkJfhz>

SUNDAY SO FAR - NBC's "Meet the Press": Mike Bloomberg. Panel: Doris Kearns Goodwin, David Brody, Al Cardenas and Katy Tur.

--**"Fox News Sunday":** Newt Gingrich, Julie Pace, Guy Benson, Rachael Bade.

BIRTHWEEK (was yesterday): FCC press secretary Tina Pelkey (hat tip: Neil Grace

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Alex Korson, executive producer of MSNBC's "Morning Joe". **How he's celebrating:** "The weekend prior: dinner with my parents at my favorite steakhouse, Capital Grille. The day of: in the 'Morning Joe' control room in the morning, and then whatever my wife and 5 year old girls have in store for me." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2xmAJbv>

BIRTHDAYS: Bloomberg's Jen Jacobs ... Kirsten Kukowski, a Scott Walker and RNC alum ... Will Nichols ... Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev ... NYT's Matt Flegenheimer (h/t Alexis Levinson) ... Russell Berman, senior associate editor at The

Atlantic ... Victoria Esser, former assistant secretary for public affairs at Treasury ... Angela Grossfeld ... CAP's Ryan Collins (h/t Patrick Dolan) ... Larry A. Mizel, CEO of MDC Holdings ... NYT Baghdad bureau chief Tim Arango ... Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.), who was at the Trump Hotel last night ... Paula Dobriansky ... Jolyn Marie Cikanek, the gov't relations and PAC manager at Genworth Financial and a Jeb and Romney alum, is 3-0. She's celebrating on her honeymoon in the southern Caribbean - **pic** (<http://bit.ly/2h4SGSf>) (hubby tip: Zachary Cikanek) ... Jim Angle ... Courtney Flantzer ... NBC News' Scott Foster (h/ts Olivia Petersen) ... Howlie Davis ... Joyce Brayboy ... Abigail Collazo ... Jay Preciado, celebrating with Erin (h/t Jon Haber) ... Rae Ryan ... Naomi Karavani ...

... **Jillian Hughes**, CBS News White House producer ... Jacob Bell ... Josh Gordon ... Brittany Parker ... Politico Europe's Christina Gennet ... Katie Boyce, managing editor for digital at Bloomberg ... John Ladd ... Kirstin Mende ... Kelly Scott ... Politico's Ethan Stackpole ... Molly Fluet ... Tim Baker ... Ben Merkel ... Reynaldo Benitez ... Brian Greer ... Hunter Matson ... Ben Murray ... Katie Smith ... Kari Scott Abitbol ... Carey Kluttz ... Trent Duffy ... Elliot Berke ... Maria Dorfner ... Amy Wren ... Clay Chandler ... Paul McCarthy ... Doug Mainwaring ... J. Eden Gordon ... Julia Cohen ... Dan Morris ... Christopher Lagan ... Kathleen O'Connell ... Ted Gup ... Judy Ann Vilmain ... Meghan Walsh, founder of Roots Ethiopia ... Dan Langer ... Hope Warschaw ... Pam Porter ... Linck Zingale ... Dave Dogan ... Ken Strasma (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** We need new rules for new 5G networks. New policies that will allow the U.S. to win the race to 5G and enable breakthrough advancements in healthcare, transportation, energy and more. First, a pipeline of low-, mid-, and high-band spectrum will help meet today's mobile needs and enable the 5G networks of tomorrow. Second, every level of government must modernize their rules for the building of small cell wireless infrastructure. Third, permanent and common sense federal regulations for interstate services like mobile broadband will preserve an open internet and protect consumer privacy while promoting innovation and investment. Finally, America's tax structure must be updated to spur billions of dollars in new 5G investment. Learn more about how wireless is working to invest in America's future at CTIA.org. *****

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Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.

To: jpounder@definercorp.com[jpounder@definercorp.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 7:29:40 PM
Subject: FW: Definers -- Clips

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: 202.309.0934

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Alexander Nazaryan[a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/1/2017 4:19:51 PM
Subject: Re:

Or this one too ...

"Administrator Pruitt has engaged with regional offices all over the country. He has worked directly with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results."

On Dec 1, 2017, at 10:13 AM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post. Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... "Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA's criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together to protect the environment and American jobs." – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... "We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms.

Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ ([Politico Pro](#), 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even before Trump’s election, and that he’s not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office.” ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. “Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care.” ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously. That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Hewitt, James[hewitt.james@epa.gov]
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Block, Molly[block.molly@epa.gov]; Daniell, Kelsi[daniell.kelsi@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:39:59 PM
Subject: RE: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

Looks good to me thanks

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>
Cc: Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: APPROVAL: well, then on a different subject...

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Greaves, Holly[greaves.holly@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 6:01:37 PM
Subject: FW: Questions about EPA morale

Have a question for you Holly which I will come up for.

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the

administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Timothy Cama[tcama@thehill.com]; Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:44:23 PM
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: Timothy Cama <tcama@thehill.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Timothy Cama [<mailto:tcama@thehill.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:38 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers

Hi-

Could you confirm the Washington Post report that EPA is ending the Definers contract?

Thanks.

--

Timothy Cama, Staff writer

The Hill

(202) 695-6245

Secure: timothy.cama@protonmail.com

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
Sent: Fri 4/7/2017 11:18:08 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by Morgan Stanley: TRUMP'S WAR IN SYRIA -- Fine-tuned machine update: BANNON vs. KUSHNER -- SCOOP: The TRUMP, MEADOWS, RYAN powwow -- HILLARY leaves the woods -- MIKE LONG heads west -- DANIEL LIPPMAN'S BIRTHDAY

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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by Morgan Stanley
04/07/2017 07:09 AM EDT

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

Driving the Day

-

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THE NEW NARRATIVE: Forget health care, infrastructure, taxes and regulations. **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** now owns a war. Trump's decision to bomb an airfield in Syria now places that nation's mess squarely on his plate. Will the attack stop Syria's President Bashar al-Assad from gassing his people? Will it force Russia to intervene to remove Assad? Can Trump find a political and diplomatic solution that has evaded other presidents? If Trump is successful, he will be hailed a victor, and his stature increases on the world stage. Major players have long clamored for someone to stop Assad.

IF TRUMP'S military strikes don't work, Assad digs in and the bloody Syrian civil war continues unabated, there will likely be pressure for more bombings, and perhaps ground troops. Expect another conversation in Washington about the Authorization for Use of Military Force -- a complex debate about America's role in the world and the president's authority to use force without Congress's approval.

TRUMP'S DOMESTIC DISSENTERS are not protesting the bombing, for the moment. For example, Nancy Pelosi called the strike a "proportional response to the regime's use of chemical weapons." But she also said, "If the President intends to escalate the U.S. military's involvement in Syria, he must ... come to Congress for an Authorization for Use of Military Force which is tailored to meet the threat and prevent another open-ended war in the Middle East."

U.S. VS. RUSSIA -- TRUMP V. PUTIN -- AP at 3:52 a.m.: "MOSCOW (AP) - Russia says it is suspending deal with U.S. to prevent mid-air incidents over Syria in response to U.S. strike." ... **at 6:14 a.m.:** "MOSCOW (AP) - Russian military says it will help Syria strengthen its air defenses after U.S. strike."

-- **KEEP IN MIND:** SecState Rex Tillerson is going to Moscow next week. These Syria strikes will have a major impact on that meeting and what the relationship between the U.S. and Russia looks like going forward.

--**WAPo's** David Filipov in Moscow: "'President Putin considers the American strikes against Syria an aggression against a sovereign government in violations of the norms of international law, and under a far-fetched pretext,' Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Friday. 'This step by Washington is causing significant damage to Russian-American relations, which are already in a deplorable state.'" <http://wapo.st/2o9qWR5>

-- **"Syria decries 'aggression' as U.S. launches cruise missiles,"** by AP's Zeina Karam and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut: "Syria called the operation 'an aggression' ... Rebels welcomed the U.S. operation ... Israel's prime minister welcomed the U.S. attack. Benjamin Netanyahu said that 'In both word and action' Trump 'sent a strong and clear message' that 'the use and spread of chemical weapons will not be tolerated.'" <http://apne.ws/2oPPWel>

-- **THE RISKS**, by NYT's David Sanger: "The first risk is that his gambit with Mr. Putin fails. ... Mr. Putin is not likely to enter into an agreement that threatens his influence over Syria, and thus his main foothold in the Middle East. Syria is home to Russia's main military base outside its own borders.

"A second risk is that Mr. Trump, in taking a shot at Mr. Assad, undercuts his own main goal in the region: defeating the Islamic State. If Syria collapses, it could become a haven for Islamic terrorists, the exact situation that Mr. Trump is trying to prevent. The third risk is that Mr. Trump has no real plan to bring peace to Syria. The American-led negotiations to create some kind of political accord -- which was John Kerry's mission for his final 18 months as secretary of state -- collapsed." <http://nyti.ms/2o97ZOK>

-- **WAPo's GREG JAFFE** raises the specter of accidentally killing Russians: "The biggest difference that Trump and his commanders confront now is the presence of Russian troops on the battlefield and Russian air defense systems that are capable of shooting down U.S. planes. Today, Russian troops are intermingled with Syrian forces, and any strike on a Syrian military target could also produce Russian military casualties.

"Retired Gen. John Allen , who coordinated the campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria during the Obama administration, said that the military strikes could have had a 'decisive' impact on the war had they been launched in 2013. He described Obama's decision not to strike as devastating. 'It is much harder now,' Allen said. 'The United States has to ask itself a question: How angry do we want to be on this issue? Are we enraged enough morally that we are ready to take action even with the

possibility of dead Russians?" <http://wapo.st/2njNBvn>

--BACKSTORY, per Nahal Toosi, Tara Palmeri, Jacqueline Klimas and Eliana Johnson: "The president was briefed Tuesday, the day of the chemical attack, on his military options ... A final meeting took place around 4 p.m. Thursday, shortly after the president arrived at Mar-a-Lago. Along with the president, that meeting included National Security Adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. In making the announcement about the strikes, the president used a teleprompter and stuck to a script. ... Trump was joined by top aides, including chief strategist Steve Bannon; chief of staff Reince Priebus; his daughter and adviser Ivanka; and Dina Powell, a top National Security Council official." <http://politi.co/2nRLHhE>

-- FROM 30,000 FEET: "Trump's Syria Whiplash," by Blake Hounshell: "In the span of one week, President Trump and his team have pirouetted from declaring that Syria's murderous dictator could stay in power to launching airstrikes against his regime -- and possibly committing the United States to a new military conflict whose scope and scale are unknown. It's a dizzying turnabout for a man who complained endlessly during the presidential campaign about the trillions the United States had wasted on wars in the Middle East -- and who urged his predecessor in 2013 not to launch 'stupid' airstrikes to punish Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons against his own people.

"But Donald Trump is nothing if not 'flexible,' as he put it in Wednesday's press conference, describing how horrific images of gassed Syrian children had changed his 'attitude' toward Assad, who U.S. intelligence agencies were quick to deem responsible. As for what punishment the president had in store for the Syrian leader, he wasn't sharing: 'I'm not saying I'm doing anything one way or the other,' Trump said. ... Nobody expected Trump, of all people, to wage a campaign to avenge Syrian children -- who, after all, aren't even allowed to come into the United States as refugees."

<http://politi.co/2oLHeky>

-- GLOBALIST TRUMP? "Trump breaks precedent by blessing the whole world," by Matt Nussbaum: "After announcing that he'd ordered U.S. missile strikes on a Syrian airfield in response to a chemical weapons attack on civilians, President Donald Trump closed his remarks with a refrain that has been common among presidents since Ronald Reagan: 'God bless America.' But he didn't stop there. Instead, he went on, adding, 'and the entire world.' Richard Nixon appears to have been the first president to use the phrase 'God bless America' in a speech, though it later became a common closing line for Ronald Reagan and his successors. George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all closed each of their state of the union addresses with some variation on the line. None extended those blessings to the world."

<http://politi.co/2nKm3KQ>

-- 3-MIN. VIDEO of Trump's statement last night on Syria <http://bit.ly/2njFcrC> ...

@TomNamako: "Pentagon released 4 short videos of missiles launched on Syria. Here they are in one file thanks to @Walldo" <http://bit.ly/2p8tDiy>

HOW IT'S PLAYING -- NYT, five-column lede, "U.S. LAUNCHES MISSILES INTO SYRIA -- Tomahawks Hit Base Tied to Gas Attack -- Trump's Warning to Assad" ... WashPost, five-col. lede, "U.S. strikes Syrian military airfield" ... WSJ, six-col. lede, "U.S. Launches Strikes on Syria -- President's order throws new administration into center of complex, treacherous conflict" ... N.Y. POST, "TRUMP STRIKES -- Prez fires missiles at Syrian butcher" <http://nyp.st/2o4jEMV> ... HuffPost, "BOMBS AWAY!" ... Drudge, "TRUMP STRIKES ASSAD!"

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** Morgan Stanley helped All Aboard Florida raise capital to bring Brightline, an express railway, to the Sunshine State-potentially cutting travel time across Southern Florida by up to 25-30%¹ versus existing options. Investing in infrastructure isn't just good for people-it can be good for cities. Learn more at morganstanley.com/brightline. *****

PALACE INTRIGUE: SCOOP: THE CALL -- After President Donald Trump met with Speaker Paul Ryan and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy Wednesday night, he had a long conference call with the leaders that included Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), the chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus. Multiple people familiar with the call say it lasted until almost midnight. They spoke about what multiple sources describe as fundamental -- and intractable -- issues with the health-care bill. It left no one optimistic that health care will get done any time soon.

-- SPEAKING OF HEALTH CARE -- "Frustration mounts, careers jeopardized over Obamacare failure," by Rachael Bade and Jen Haberkorn: "Tempers are flaring at the White House over House Republicans' failure to repeal Obamacare. But that hasn't changed the reality on the ground: As Congress skips town for a two-week recess, Speaker Paul Ryan and his team are no closer to approving legislation. In fact, some Ryan allies worry that the White House involvement has only set GOP leaders back further." <http://politi.co/2njZMIM>

FINE-TUNED MACHINE UPDATE -- NYT A1, "In Battle for Trump's Heart and Mind, It's Bannon vs. Kushner," by Maggie Haberman, Jeremy Peters and Peter Baker: "Thick with tension, the conversation this week between Stephen K. Bannon, the chief White House strategist, and Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, had deteriorated to the point of breakdown. Finally, Mr. Bannon identified why they could not compromise, according to someone with knowledge of the conversation. 'Here's the reason there's no middle ground,' Mr. Bannon growled. 'You're a Democrat.' The schism within Mr. Trump's perpetually fractious White House has grown in recent weeks, fueled by personality, ideology and ambition. ...

"At different moments, Mr. Trump has given conflicting impressions of his preferences. He has privately scorned the coverage of Mr. Kushner's recent high-profile trip to Iraq, according to two people who spoke with him, and questioned the need for his son-in-law's newly created office to overhaul the government. At other points, he has been dismissive of Mr. Bannon, curtly telling him he is not needed at this meeting or that. ... [T]he main players have grown so wary of leaving Mr. Trump's side that it has

become hard to organize meetings of senior officials without him, to thrash through policies or hiring choices, slowing up an already fitful process." <http://nyti.ms/2njGkfb>

-- **"Bannon wants a war on Washington. Now he's part of one inside the White House,"** by WaPo's Ashley Parker, Bob Costa and Abby Phillip: "[T]he ultimate argument against him, said one person with knowledge of the situation, is that 'Bannon isn't making 'Dad' look good.' ... [F]riends of both Bannon and Kushner, who talk daily and still have a cordial rapport, say the tensions are mostly driven by policy. ... [B]ecause Kushner holds so much clout, many of his rivals fear bad-mouthing him and train their ire on his deputies instead [T]he ongoing drama has taken a toll on West Wing operations, where aides continue to jockey for power and worry about their job security. One senior official pointed to Trump's interview Wednesday with the New York Times, during which at least five senior White House staffers, as well as Pence, crowded into the Oval Office. 'Why were they there?' asked the official, saying they should have been working on other tasks. 'Now the expectation is you have to be in every picture and every meeting.'" <http://wapo.st/2oQ01Za>

-- **"Steve Bannon Calls Jared Kushner a 'Cuck' and 'Globalist' Behind His Back,"** by The Daily Beast's Asawin Suebsaeng. <http://thebea.st/2njH4Rw>

THE HOUSE FREEDOM CAUCUS Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), the group's founding chairman and Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) sat down with us Thursday for a live Playbook Interview, sponsored by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. The trio had plenty to talk about, including what Trump could offer conservatives to get them to support a health care bill and how they believe a government shutdown could be avoided.

-- **HEALTH CARE CONSERVATIVES COULD BACK:** Meadows told us the Freedom Caucus would back a legislative offer made by VP Mike Pence. "If those offers that were made over the last couple of days actually appear in the legislation, the majority, if not almost all of the Freedom Caucus will vote for this bill." **Video** <http://bit.ly/2nOumGF>

-- **'HIGHLY INAPPROPRIATE' FOR TEAM TRUMP TO THREATEN REP. JUSTIN AMASH WITH A PRIMARY:** "It was highly inappropriate for that to happen. And I've shared that with the administration," Meadows said. "And it's one thing for the president to do it. And legally, he's allowed to do it. But it is very different for a staffer to use his official capacity to do that. It's just inappropriate, and he can tweet at me all day long. It was not appropriate."

KNOWING CONAWAY -- House Intel Chairman Devin Nunes stepped aside from leading the chamber's probe into Russian hacking in the 2016 election giving way to Rep. Mike Conaway to take over. A couple of key things to know about the Texas Republican: he uncovered an accounting scandal at the NRCC in 2008 when he served as audit chair of the executive committee; former Speaker John Boehner had considered him to lead the intel panel before tapping him to head the chamber's ethics committee; and he was one of the names floated to replace Boehner as speaker,

though he never officially raised his hand for the job.

SCOOP -- "Sources: TPP negotiator rejoining U.S. trade office," by Andrew Restuccia, Alex Isenstadt and Nahal Toosi: "Andrew Quinn, a White House trade adviser who has come under fire from conservatives for his role in negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is being reassigned to the United States Trade Representative's office, three administration officials told POLITICO." <http://politi.co/2njT5pO>

THE JUICE ...

-- **PARTY TIME:** RealClearPolitics, the National Restaurant Association, the Distilled Spirits Council and the Beer Institute are hosting "A Toast to the First Amendment" Friday, April 28 honoring the White House Correspondents' Dinner. The reception will invite guests to celebrate freedom of speech and the role of the press.

-- **FLORIDA PLAYBOOKER MARC CAPUTO** reports that Carlos Gimenez Jr., a Trump consultant and the Miami-Dade mayor's son, is joining Corey Lewandowski's lobbying firm Avenue Strategies. <http://politi.co/2nR4Hx2>

-- **BOB WOODWARD** and **CARL BERNSTEIN** will present Greg Jaffe of the Washington Post, Isaac Dove of POLITICO and David Fahrenthold of the Washington Post with their White House Correspondents' Association 2017 journalism awards at the annual dinner April 29.

TRUMP is at Mar-a-Lago with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

--**VP MIKE PENCE** is going to the Capitol today to preside over the vote (just before noon) that will make Neil Gorsuch a Supreme Court justice.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: The guided-missile destroyer USS Porter conducts strike operations while in the Mediterranean Sea on April 7. The U.S. has carried out a missile attack against an air base in Syria in response to a suspected chemical weapons. | Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ford Williams/U.S. Navy via AP

STORIES THAT MAKE HARRY REID ANGRY -- NYT A1, "C.I.A. Had Evidence of Russian Effort to Help Trump Earlier Than Believed," by Eric Lichtblau: "The C.I.A. told senior lawmakers in classified briefings last summer that it had information indicating that Russia was working to help elect Donald J. Trump president, a finding

that did not emerge publicly until after Mr. Trump's victory months later, former government officials say. The briefings indicate that intelligence officials had evidence of Russia's intentions to help Mr. Trump much earlier in the presidential campaign than previously thought. The briefings also reveal a critical split last summer between the C.I.A. and counterparts at the F.B.I., where a number of senior officials continued to believe through last fall that Russia's cyberattacks were aimed only at disrupting America's political system, and not at getting Mr. Trump elected ... The former officials said that in late August -- 10 weeks before the election -- John O. Brennan, then the C.I.A. director, was so concerned about increasing evidence of Russia's election meddling that he began a series of urgent, individual briefings for eight top members of Congress, some of them on secure phone lines while they were on their summer break."

<http://nyti.ms/2nRcTx4>

VALLEY TALK -- "Twitter sues over feds' request to unmask owner of @ALT_USCIS account," by Josh Gerstein: "Twitter is suing the federal government over what the company says is an unconstitutional effort to expose the identity of the creator of one of the many anti-Trump 'alt' federal agency accounts that popped up soon after President Donald Trump was sworn in. On Thursday, the short-message social-media site sued the Department of Homeland Security in U.S. District Court in San Francisco, seeking to void a summons that a Customs and Border Protection agent sent to the company demanding that it turn over records identifying those behind the '@ALT_USCIS' account - a Twitter handle apparently used by one or more employees of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services." <http://politi.co/2p8gU0f>

PREET SPEAKS -- "Bharara needles Trump during first post-firing speech," by Colby Hamilton: "In his first public appearance since departing as Manhattan U.S. attorney, Preet Bharara took shots at his former boss, however briefly, during a speech in the Cooper Union's Great Hall in Manhattan Thursday night. The former federal prosecutor discussed his firing, his greatest moments in the U.S. attorney's office and his concerns for the future, speaking specifically as an Indian immigrant during a time of uncertainty under President Donald Trump." <http://politi.co/2oLJckS>

--"Preet Bharara Links Firing to Trump Team's 'Helter-Skelter Incompetence,'" by NYT's Benjamin Weiser and William K. Rashbaum: "Mr. Bharara also disclosed that Mr. Trump, after having asked him to remain in his post, telephoned him three times, raising concern among Mr. Bharara and his aides that such calls could run afoul of strict Justice Department protocols governing communications with the White House." <http://nyti.ms/2ofUdtM>

******* A message from Morgan Stanley:** Morgan Stanley helped raise the capital needed by innovative company All Aboard Florida to enhance Florida's infrastructure by developing the nation's first express, intercity rail, Brightline. The train, connecting cities across Southern Florida, is expected to cut down on travel time for residents and tourists, and could potentially add up to hundreds of millions in federal, state and local government tax revenue over the next several years.¹ Capital creates better connections for people, communities and cities. Learn more at

morganstanley.com/brightline. Capital creates change. *****

HILLARY LEAVES THE WOODS -- NYT A21, "Hillary Clinton Says Russia Used Hacking 'to Great Effect' in Her Defeat," by Sarah Maslin Nir: "Hillary Clinton left no doubt on Thursday that she believes Russia contributed to her defeat by interfering in the election, condemning what she called Moscow's 'weaponization of information.' ... Mrs. Clinton ... called for an independent investigation into Russian involvement. 'I'm hopeful that the Congress will pull together and realize that because of the success the Kremlin feels it's had they're not going to go away,' Mrs. Clinton said [at the Women in the World conference, interviewed by Nick Kristof] ... She did not stint on criticism of the Trump White House. 'I don't take any pleasure in seeing the kind of chaotic functioning' of the current administration, Mrs. Clinton said. 'Here's what I don't understand - I don't understand the commitment to hurt so many people that this administration, this White House, seems to be pursuing.' ... 'The targeting of women - which is what's going on - is absolutely beyond any political agenda,' Mrs. Clinton said." <http://nyti.ms/2nKnBo4> ... **Full video -- Clinton was introduced by Samantha Bee** <http://bit.ly/2oLBgzP>

-- **@SteveKopack**: "Hillary Clinton on election aftermath: 'As a person, I'm O.K. As an American, I'm pretty worried.'" <http://bit.ly/2oPUuBF>

HE'S BACK? -- MCKAY COPPINS in The Atlantic, "Senator Mitt Romney?": "Republican leaders and high-powered donors in Utah are waging a quiet but concerted campaign to convince 83-year-old incumbent Senator Orrin Hatch not to seek reelection next year-and now, they may have found a successor. Mitt Romney, the one-time presidential nominee and leading Trump critic, is exploring a run for Hatch's Senate seat. According to six sources familiar with the situation, Romney has spent recent weeks actively discussing a potential 2018 Senate bid with a range of high-level Republicans in both Utah and Washington, and has privately signaled a growing interest in the idea. Romney, though, has made clear he would not pursue the seat without Hatch's blessing." <http://theatlantic.com/2oFVwx5>

WINDFALL -- "Donors' Enthusiasm for Trump Energizes RNC Fundraising," by WSJ's Rebecca Ballhaus: "The [RNC], together with President Donald Trump's re-election campaign, raised more than \$53 million in the first quarter of 2017 ... fueled by the same class of online donors who flocked to Mr. Trump last year. Of that, the RNC raised \$41.3 million in the first three months of the year-more than double what its Democratic counterpart raised in the quarter after former President Barack Obama was elected in 2008." <http://on.wsj.com/2nRufKg>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Corey Lewandowski and former RNC Chairman Michael Steele having

lunch yesterday at Joe's Stone Crab ... Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) first off the American Airlines flight to Hartford after his flight was delayed 2 hours at DCA and the plane had to circle Hartford before landing ... Texas Reps. Joe Barton and Marc Veasey cooling their heels Thursday in the DCA Admirals Club, waiting out weather delays during the afternoon thunderstorms ... Hillary Clinton and Huma Abedin last night at the opening of "War Paint" on Broadway ... Kathy Griffin yesterday in the Capitol outside the House chamber talking to Dana Bash ... Pat Collins of NBC 4 in the Delta Sky360 Club at Nationals Park -- **pic** <http://bit.ly/2nKAQ8k>

MCCARTHY VET HEADS WEST -- Mike Long, a veteran aide to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), loyal friend and Playbooker, is moving west to California this month. McCarthy: "Mike was one of the first hires I made after being elected Majority Whip in 2011. Starting as a deputy press secretary and leaving as communications director speaks volumes to his work ethic, intellect and commitment to the team. Over the last six years and countless legislative battles Mike's counsel, instinct, and friendship have been an invaluable presence. We will miss him around the Capitol but we'll be seeing plenty of him back home in California."

-- **SPOTTED** at a goodbye party on the Speaker's balcony Wednesday night: Paul Kane, Michael Steel, John Murray, Brad Dayspring, Rachael Bade, Jackie Kucinich, Sue Davis, Deirdre Walsh, Matt Sparks, Laena Fallon, Erica Elliott, Kristina Peterson, John Bresnahan, Chris Bond, Parker Polling, Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.), Brendan Buck, AshLee Strong, Doug Andres and many more.

-- **MATT SPARKS**, the pride of Baltimore and Silver Spring, is being promoted to communications director for McCarthy.

TRANSITIONS - Heineken USA has hired **David Morgenstern** as their new senior director of government affairs. He previously was at the Podesta Group, where he served as a principal since 2011. ... **Iram Ali**, the White House liaison to the Department of Defense under President Obama, has joined Amazon as the senior lead for DOD public policy. She starts in May. ... **Ashton Barry** joins Quorum this week. She previously oversaw strategic relationships for The Cook Political Report.

--**EMILY'S LIST** senior staff announced -- **Kate Black**: chief of staff ... **Leila McDowell**: vice president of communications ... **Muthoni Wambu Kraal**: vice president of national outreach and training ... **Leigh K Warren**: chief operating officer ... **Melissa Williams**: vice president of independent expenditures. <http://politi.co/2oLDm2Q>

--The Biden Foundation has added two former White House advisers to their growing staff. **Gautam Raghavan**, former White House LGBTQ liaison, will work on the foundation's work on its equality pillar, and **Lynn Rosenthal**, former WH adviser on violence against women, will serve as policy director for its ending violence against women pillar. <http://bit.ly/2oHloOa>

OUT AND ABOUT -- Rakel Cohen, Emily Lenzner and Steve Clemons last night hosted

a dinner and discussion at the backroom at Kingbird at the Watergate hotel. **SPOTTED:** Kevin Merida, Susan Toffler, Josh Wachs, Sena Fitzmaurice, Robin Sproul (a birthday girl tomorrow), Bernadette Meehan, Alan Fleischmann, Ben Chang, Susannah Wellford, Artur Orkisz, Natalie Jones, Francesca Craig, Andrew Oros, Doug Rediker, Nadia Szold, former Ambassador Tom Korologos, Meghan Dubyak, Pam Stevens, Kevin Turpin, Luke Hartig.

--**Last night, progressive think tank Demos** hosted an open house at its new D.C. office with more than 100 friends and supporters from MoveOn, Greenpeace, Every Voice, People for the American Way, Sierra Club, SEIU, AFL-CIO, United We Dream, and Color of Change. President Heather McGhee, Rep. Keith Ellison, and Vox's Ezra Klein fired up the crowd with welcoming remarks. **SPOTTED :** Demos' Tamara Draut, Joseph DiNorcia, Brenda Wright and Tori O'Neal, Harvard's Ash Center and Demos founder Miles Rapoport, AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride, Democracy Fund's Adam Ambrogi and Lauren Strayer, SKDKnickerbocker's Kelley McCormick and Bianca Prade, DC City Council members Robert White and Daniel Wise, Arlene Holt Baker, and Brandon Davis.

SUNDAY SO FAR - "Fox News Sunday": Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) ... Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.). Power Player: Admiral William H. McRaven (ret.), Chancellor of the University of Texas System and author of "Make Your Bed". Panel: Bill Kristol, Mo Elleithee, Lisa Boothe, Juan Williams

--**NBC's "Meet the Press":** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). Panel: David Brooks, Helene Cooper, Danielle Pletka, Rich Lowry

--**CBS' "Face the Nation":** Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) ... Tom Donilon. Political panel: Ruth Marcus, Ramesh Ponnuru, Ed O'Keefe, and Michael Duffy

--**ABC's "This Week":** Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.)

--**CNN's "Inside Politics":** Julie Pace, Perry Bacon, Molly Ball, Phil Mattingly

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: McConnell alum **Josh Holmes**, president and founding partner of Cavalry LLC, celebrating in town by having dinner with wife Blair. Josh's goal for the next year: "My wife is expecting this summer and my top priority is to be the best dad in the entire world." Read his Playbook Plus Q&A: <http://politi.co/2o4BnDY>

BIRTHDAYS: Daniel Lippman is 27 (h/t all of D.C.) ... Bill McQuillen, senior director of public affairs of Burson-Marsteller and a Bloomberg alum ... Hilary Perry, a Chapel Hill native and UNC grad (h/ts Keil) ... Michael Meehan, CEO of Squared Communications and founding partner of the Potomac West Group ... California Gov. Jerry Brown is 79 ... former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, now president of Purdue University, is 68 ... Politico's Darren Samuelsohn, Maggie Severns, Greg Hellman, Jon Otto, and Fernando Rodas ... media commentator Hodding Carter III is 82 ... HuffPost's senior politics editor Paige Lavender ... Cliff Hackel ... Bonnie Levin of MedStar Health and pride of

Baltimore, celebrating with her family (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Chimene Okere, special adviser for capital access at SBA, is 25 ... Tony Zeng, JPM Tech and #BigOrange alum, is 26 ... Eric Walker, DNC's deputy comms. director ... Angus Viebranz (h/t Max Root) ... Alyssa Canobbio, war room director at the Washington Free Beacon ... CNN White House producer Noah Gray is 25 ... Rep. Robert Brady (D-Pa.) is 72 ... Sam Brill ... Andrew Holt, former publisher of City & State magazine and current publishing and events consultant ... Sara Lynn Croom, managing director at Ainsley Shea Potomac ...

... **Kaitlan Collins**, White House correspondent at The Daily Caller and the biggest Bama fan ... Ming Dang, principal at Apollo Global Management ... Cara Bowers ... WJLA alum Dan Patrick ... Ali Swee of the Senate Ag Committee and Targeted Victory alum (h/t Megan McKinley) ... Aleesa Mann, a Politico alum ... WashTimes' Jessica Chasmar ... Eugene Kiely, director of FactCheck.org ... Valerie Nelson, senior managing director in Dentons' Public Policy and Regulation practice and a Cantor alum ... former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder is 73 ... Antoine Artiganave ... Rene Redwood ... Fabiola Rodriguez-Ciampoli ... Dana Gray ... Mark Rhomberg ... Simon Lieber ... Antoine Artiganave (h/ts Teresa Vilmain) ... Jimmy Williams, host at DecodeDC ... John J. Louizos ... Denis Gray ... Hilary Lefebvre, founder of AcadiaCo and founder and president of On Air Strategy and an ABC News alum ... Collin Hansen ... Tom Lehner, VP of public policy at Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association ... Sam Brill ... Curt Grieve ... Ryan Miller ... movie director Francis Ford Coppola is 78 ... Jackie Chan is 63 ... Russell Crowe is 53 ... Tiki Barber is 42 (h/ts AP)

***** **A message from Morgan Stanley:** All Aboard Florida wanted to create a faster and easier way to move around Florida. Morgan Stanley helped them raise capital to begin development of the country's first express, intercity railway to do just that. Not only are the new Brightline trains expected to reduce travel time across Southern Florida by approximately an hour¹, but they're also projected to take up to 3 million vehicles off the road each year, helping to reduce congestion and harmful emissions¹. Read more about Morgan Stanley's work at morganstanley.com/brightline. Capital creates change.

Disclaimer:

¹ Based on data provided by All Aboard Florida. For more information visit:

<http://allaboardflorida.com/project-details/aaf-fact-sheet>

CRC 1737672 03/17 *****

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To: Alex Guillen[aguillen@politico.com]
Cc: Anthony Adragna[aadragna@politico.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 12:35:30 PM
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Cool. I will send over the full table in a clean email.

From: Alex Guillen [mailto:aguillen@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:32 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Anthony Adragna <aadragna@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Looping in Anthony, ME's author, but those numbers are good for me to have on hand for when this inevitably comes up later.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:26 AM
To: Alex Guillen <aguillen@politico.com>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

So you include half the story (Carper's story) but not the other half (EPA's story) that we've received to 11 of the 20 letters and that 7 of the past 9 are under 30 days.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrat-tom-carper-wont-support-trumps-epa-nominee-because-he-says-scott-pruitt-is-a-bad-penpal/article/2625486>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [mailto:politicoemail@politico.com]

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 5:45 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. [Ed Markey](#) is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning [vote](#) on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually [package](#) Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is a getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA [rounded up](#) compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman [John Barrasso](#) echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#) that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

If you go: The [hearing](#) starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [appears before](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then [heads to](#) a Senate Appropriations subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke [recommended](#) Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary

Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction [here](#).

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has [proposed](#) to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its [Cooperative Federalism 2.0](#) approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy [argues](#) in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller [reports](#). The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released an analysis finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. Dan Kildee holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a lawsuit to block the merger today, along with a proposed settlement that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris released a letter urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's

national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a [new report](#) today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior [launched](#) a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website [here](#) (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

— Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. [Houston Chronicle](#).

— Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. [API](#).

— TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. [Bismarck Tribune](#).

— Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. [Des Moines Register](#).

— BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The Methanol Policy Forum](#)," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — Senate committee [hearing](#) on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "[Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success](#)," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth

11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org

11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov

11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a

renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-

advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials instructed government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance memo that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's preliminary recommendations to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report [recommended](#) Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even

though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. [Orrin Hatch](#) (R-Utah) in a tweeted [video](#) said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the [plan](#) it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists wrote that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, arguing as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to defend globalization and to protect the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO2 emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it cancelled 85 new coal fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have exceeded China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China invested \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also ranks first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016, in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO2 cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO2 on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO2 emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO2 emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical

plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO₂ as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of almost 800 million tons per year, more than Germany's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO₂ contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2 degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon [leapt into the public eye](#) Monday morning via reports from security firms [Dragos](#) and [ESET](#). Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a [little-noticed cyberattack](#) on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 [digital strike](#) on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last

place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to a summary report. But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado [warned](#) may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird, since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

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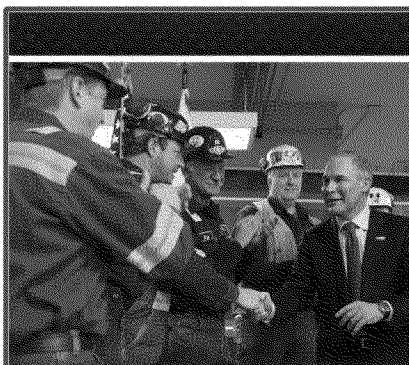
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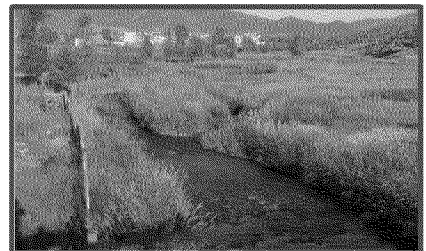
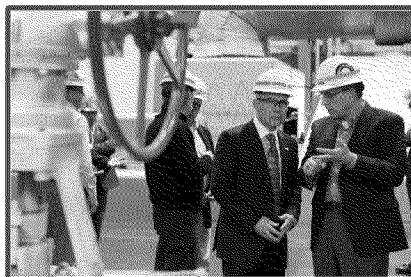
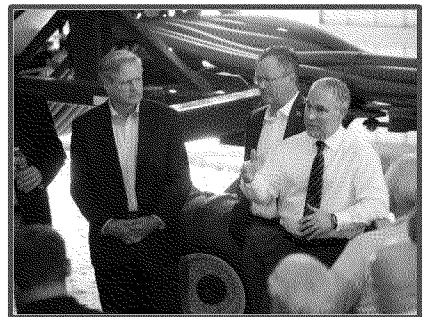
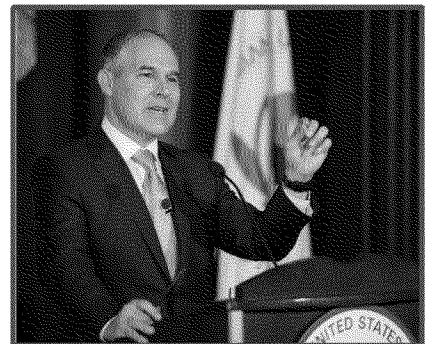
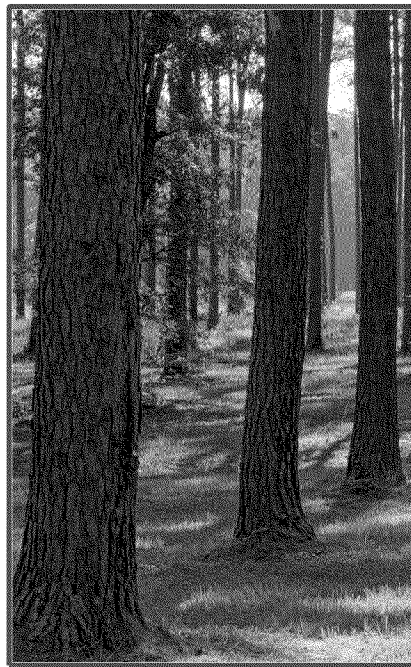


EPA Year in Review 2017-2018



**EPA'S
BACK-TO-BASICS
AGENDA**

- ✓ Protecting the **environment**
- ✓ **Engaging** with partners
- ✓ Sensible regulations for **economic growth**

Friends and Colleagues –

We have been hard at work enacting President Donald Trump's agenda during my first year as EPA Administrator. His courage and leadership have been key to our success. From his decision to exit the Paris Accord to his executive order empowering EPA to review and rescind the Clean Power Plan, the President is delivering on his promises and getting results for the American people.

We are following his lead. Days after being sworn in, I addressed EPA's employees and committed to listening and working cooperatively with states and stakeholders to tackle today's environmental challenges. In my first year, I traveled to 30 states and U.S. territories and met with 34 bipartisan governors and over 350 stakeholder groups. We are taking important actions in collaboration with – not opposition to – the states.

I committed to refocusing the Agency on its core mission. Today, we are focusing on cleaning up contaminated lands, improving air quality and rebuilding America's water infrastructure. Finally, I promised that we would restore the rule of law. We are rescinding and replacing the burdensome Waters of the U.S. rule, and we ended the harmful and wrongful practice of "sue and settle."

These are just a few examples of my commitment to fulfilling these promises. This report details EPA's accomplishments and what they mean for the American people and the environment. The sum of these actions is monumental: In year one, EPA finalized 22 deregulatory actions, saving Americans more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.

We have made tremendous progress in year one to implement the President's vision. EPA today is more efficient, more effective and more transparent in carrying out its all-important task of protecting human health and the environment. Much work remains to be done though. We will help repair our nation's crumbling water infrastructure; we will continue to clean up and revitalize more Superfund sites; and we will work with states to continue to improve air quality. Thanks to our reforms and improvements in year one, we now have the framework and policies in place to tackle these problems head on.

I look forward to working together to accomplish even more progress in 2018.

Sincerely,

E. Scott Pruitt

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Accomplishments

- ❑ Halted Job-Killing, Burdensome, Duplicative Regulations
- ❑ Eliminated Agency Backlogs, Improved Efficiency
- ❑ Increased Transparency, Accountability
- ❑ Returned to Cooperative Federalism
- ❑ Restored the Rule of Law, Process
- ❑ Improved Compliance and Assistance

In one year, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt spearheaded 22 deregulatory actions that could save the American people more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.

By the Numbers:

- ❑ IMPLEMENTING EXECUTIVE ORDERS (E.O.): EPA quickly acted on President Donald Trump's E.O. to review the 2015 definition of "Waters of the U.S.," President Trump's Energy Independence E.O. to propose a repeal of the so-called "Clean Power Plan," and President Trump's "Regulatory Reform" E.O. 13777 by finalizing two deregulatory actions for each regulatory action – with ZERO net costs to the U.S. economy.
- ❑ REGULATORY REFORM: 22 deregulatory actions were finalized, which could save more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs; EPA also initiated work on an additional 44 deregulatory actions and announced the reconsideration of over a dozen overreaching and burdensome regulations.
- ❑ OUTREACH: Administrator Pruitt consulted with 95 bipartisan members of Congress, 34 bipartisan governors, visited 30 states and U.S. territories, and met with over 350 stakeholder groups.
- ❑ AIR: EPA acted on 322 State Implementation Plans (SIPs) and turned one Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) into a SIP each month since March 1, 2017.
- ❑ WATER: 3,000 Total Maximum Daily Loads were approved and EPA focused on the priority water bodies selected by states. EPA also: cut the amount of time it took to review state water quality standards in half (from 120 days to 60); committed \$25 million in water infrastructure loans; disbursed \$8.9 billion in State Revolving Funds to improve our nation's water quality; and awarded \$100 million to Flint, Michigan for water infrastructure upgrades.
- ❑ LAND: Seven contaminated sites were eliminated, substantially or entirely, from the National Priorities List (NPL) of contaminated sites; only two sites were removed the previous year. EPA also awarded \$60 million in Brownfields cleanup grants to local communities.
- ❑ CHEMICALS: 600 new chemical submissions were **stuck in the Agency's backlog as of January 2017**; EPA cleared the backlog and ensured that all new chemicals coming to market received a safety determination within about 90 days.
- ❑ ENFORCEMENT: In FY17, \$1.6 billion was collected in administrative and civil judicial penalties, higher than any of the previous ten years, other than FY16, which included one \$5.7 billion action taken. EPA also celebrated an increase in the value of commitments by private parties to clean up land to more than \$1.2 billion, an increase in the total of criminal fines, restitution and mitigation to \$2.98 billion, and an increase in the value of actions to improve compliance to nearly \$20 billion.

Introduction

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plays a vital role in American society. It is a role that is clearly defined by Congress, its statutes, and – from time to time – the courts. EPA most-effectively protects the environment and human health when it operates within the bounds of its authority. However, when EPA strays outside that role, it encumbers both environmental protections and economic growth.

At the outset of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's tenure, he set forth a **"back-to-basics agenda"** centered on returning EPA to its proper role via three objectives:

- 1) **Refocusing the Agency back to its core mission**
- 2) **Restoring power to the states through cooperative federalism**
- 3) **Adhering to the rule of law and improving Agency processes**

In one year, EPA has made tremendous environmental progress in line with these goals, and it shows that the Agency can be both pro-environment and pro-growth.

The combination of a refocused Agency, cooperative federalism, and rule of law has unleashed new optimism throughout the nation. Americans can trust that environmental hazards will be addressed quickly and thoroughly; states and industry will be treated as partners, not opponents; and regulations will provide clarity, not confusion. The results are a cleaner, safer, and stronger America for all.

Core Mission

The first of the three pillars of Administrator Pruitt's **"back-to-basics agenda"** is to refocus the Agency on its core mission: clean air, land,

and water. EPA was founded in 1970 in order to consolidate the federal government's environmental efforts under one roof and better enforce the environmental laws passed by Congress. In recent years, however, EPA expanded its authority and jurisdiction into areas outside its core mission. In the process, central responsibilities of the Agency took a backseat to ideological crusades, allowing some environmental threats – like cleaning up toxic land – to go unaddressed. Administrator Pruitt returned the Agency to its core mission and prioritized issues at the heart of EPA's purpose: ensuring access to clean air and water, cleaning up contaminated lands and returning them to communities for reuse, improving water infrastructure, and ensuring chemicals entering the marketplace are reviewed for safety. In just one year, EPA made immense progress on these fronts, and the American people have seen real, tangible results.



AIR: Improve Air Quality

Clean Power Plan

The Clean Power Plan (CPP) appears to have **far exceeded the Agency's statutory authority**, while imposing massive regulatory burdens on affordable energy for hardworking American families. The U.S. Supreme Court issued an unprecedented stay of the rule in 2016. After **calls for a review in President Trump's Energy Independence Executive Order**, Administrator Pruitt proposed a repeal of the CPP on **October 10, 2017. EPA's proposed action on CPP** is estimated to save the U.S. economy up to \$33 billion in avoided compliance costs.

As part of the ongoing repeal process, the Agency heard directly from stakeholders and citizens most impacted by the rule, including a listening session in Charleston, West Virginia – the heart of coal country. Three additional listening sessions took place in Kansas City, Missouri; San Francisco, California; and Gillette, Wyoming.

"Consistent with our commitment to the rule of law, we've already set in motion an assessment of the previous administration's questionable legal basis in our proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan. With a clean slate, we can now move forward to provide regulatory certainty. It ensures adequate and early opportunity for public comment from all stakeholders about next steps the Agency might take to limit greenhouse gases from stationary sources, in a way that properly stays within the law, and the bounds of the authority provided to EPA by Congress."

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

In a separate but related action, EPA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to solicit information from the public about a potential new rule regulating greenhouse gas emissions from power plants consistent with the Clean Air Act and proper relations between EPA and the states.

Ozone

EPA is committed to prioritizing air quality improvements and partnering with states to ensure more Americans are living and working **in areas that meet our nation's stringent air quality standards**. Under current measurements, roughly 40 percent of the nation fails to meet attainment standards set under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Under Administrator **Pruitt's leadership, EPA is working with states** to develop air quality plans and address underlying technical issues. In November 2017, **consistent with Administrator Pruitt's** pledge to be more responsive to local needs, EPA found that more than 2,600 counties – roughly 85 percent of the U.S. – met the stringent 2015 NAAQS for ground-level ozone. The Agency is now working to finalize designations for the remaining areas. Administrator Pruitt also established an Ozone Cooperative Compliance Task Force to develop additional flexibilities for states to comply with ozone standards.

State Implementation Plans

Rather than work cooperatively with states to implement clean air programs, President **Obama's EPA imposed more than 50 FIPs** – the equivalent of a top-down mandate – on states. EPA recognizes that states have an enormous role to play in environmental protection and the Agency can improve outcomes through collaboration, not federal dictates. Under **Pruitt's leadership, EPA has turned an average** of one FIP into a SIP every month. Since March 2017, EPA has worked with states to approve more than 200 SIPs. Under its FY18 – FY19

Agency Priority Goals, EPA, in close collaboration with states, will reduce the number of nonattainment areas by nearly 20 percent.

- During the Obama Administration, more than 50 FIPs were imposed on states, including nearly 20 under the Regional Haze program.
- Under the Trump Administration, with EPA Administrator Pruitt's leadership, EPA has turned at least one FIP into a SIP approximately every month.

Renewable Fuel Standard

As directed by the Clean Air Act, EPA finalized volume requirements for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) maintaining renewable fuel volumes at levels comparable to the 2017 standards, recognizing limits to the growth of cellulosic and advanced biofuels, and understanding both market realities and consumer demand. Finalizing these volumes consistent with the statutory timeline helped stabilize the renewable fuels program and provide regulatory certainty.

Permitting Reform for New Source Review

Consistent with President Trump's priorities and under Administrator Pruitt's direction, EPA is taking steps to clarify, revise, and streamline preconstruction requirements under the New Source Review (NSR) permitting program. **EPA's permitting requirements will no longer stifle a company's ability to invest in the latest and greatest technologies or make continued improvements to their operations.** On December 7, 2017, EPA took an important step to achieving this goal by issuing a guidance

memorandum. The memo makes clear that, under current NSR regulations, the Agency is **not to "second guess" an owner or operator's analysis**, as long as it is done in a manner consistent with NRS requirements. It further clarified that the true environmental impacts of the project – via post-construction actual emissions data – will guide enforcement actions.

"Once In Always In" Is Out

In a 1995 memo, EPA established a "once in always in" policy that required any facility subject to major source standards for hazardous air pollutants to always remain subject to those standards, even if production processes changed or controls were implemented that eliminated or permanently reduced that facility's potential to emit hazardous air pollutants. This policy served as a disincentive for efforts to improve air quality and was also inconsistent with the Clean Air Act.

"This guidance is based on a plain language reading of the statute that is in line with EPA's guidance for other provisions of the Clean Air Act. It will reduce regulatory burden for industries and the states, while continuing to ensure stringent and effective controls on hazardous air pollutants."

**- EPA's Office of Air and Radiation
Assistant Administrator Bill Wehrum**

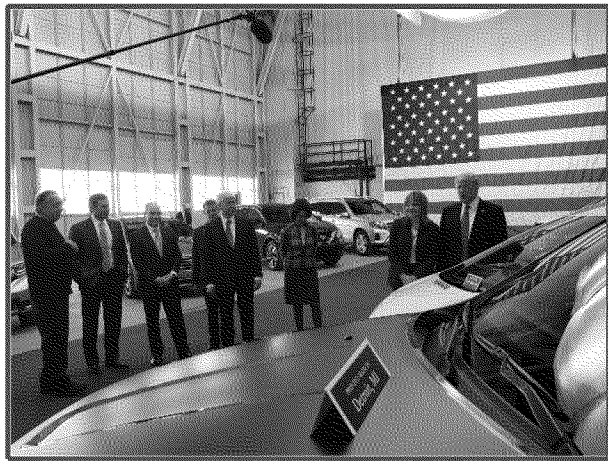
EPA issued a guidance memorandum in January 2018 withdrawing the "once in always in" policy. The memo from EPA's Office of Air and Radiation Assistant Administrator Bill Wehrum finds that EPA had no statutory authority under the Clean Air Act to place a time limit on when a facility may be determined to be an area source. Under the Clean Air Act, facilities can be reclassified as "area" (minor) sources once their potential to

emit hazardous air pollutants falls below the levels that define major sources. This action represents another major step by EPA to reduce burdens that deterred a core mission: improving air quality.

National Program for Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Fuel Economy Standards

EPA has taken multiple steps over the past year to review the regulatory overreach of the previous administration in the transportation sector.

Alongside U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Elaine Chao, Administrator **Pruitt announced the agencies' intentions to** reestablish the original timeline for public input for the Midterm Evaluation (MTE). This process is a key to assessing the appropriateness of the **previous administration's standards for** greenhouse gases and fuel economy for light-duty vehicles for Model Years 2022-2025. **Under Administrator Pruitt's leadership,** forward-looking actions will ensure that the **program is beneficial for both consumers and** the environment.



Administrator Pruitt traveled to Ypsilanti, Mich. with DOT Secretary Chao and President Trump to discuss CAFE standards.

EPA also reviewed, and then issued, a proposal to undo the regulatory overreach of the Phase II Fuel Efficiency Standards for medium- and

heavy-duty trucks as applied to the glider industry. Gliders are a specially manufactured type of heavy-duty highway vehicle. Proposing to repeal this provision is a direct result of **Administrator Pruitt's commitment to regulate** consistent with the rule of law as the previous **administration's rule for gliders did not comply** with the Clean Air Act.

Carbon Neutrality for Biomass

As directed by Congress and in conjunction with **President Trump's Executive Order "Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth,"** a multi-agency effort has been initiated between EPA, the U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a mechanism for federal cooperation and consistency on the use of biomass. EPA is working to develop a range of options in accordance with a carbon-neutral policy for biomass from forests and other lands and sectors as part of its ongoing review of the Clean Air Act permitting programs. Incorporating these sources into an **"all of the above" energy portfolio will ensure** biomass plays a key role in addressing the energy needs of the U.S. in an economically and environmentally beneficial way.

"For years, the federal government rendered most U.S. forestry producers ineligible for federal procurement projects and created confusion around biomass carbon neutrality. EPA is focused on clarifying regulations that were encumbering the industry."

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

WATER: Provide for Clean and Safe Water

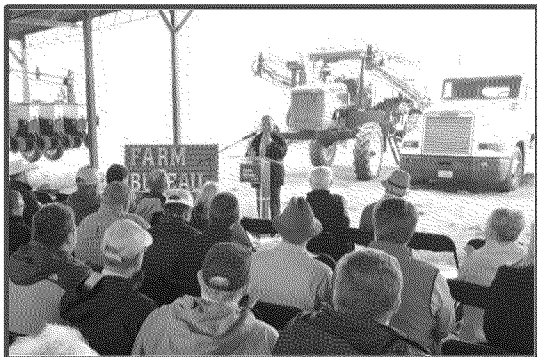
Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

On February 28, 2017, President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order directing EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to review this issue. Within a few months, the agencies proposed a rule to rescind the 2015 “Waters of the United States” rule to provide regulatory certainty to American farmers, landowners, and businesses, and put an end to one-size-fits-all regulations from Washington.

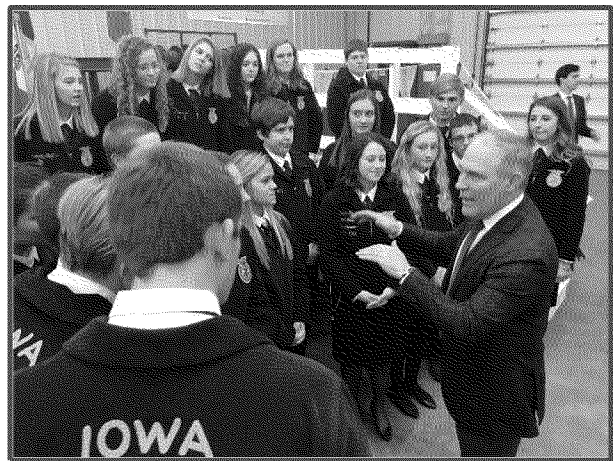
“We are taking significant action to return power to the states and provide regulatory certainty to our nation’s farmers and businesses. This is the first step in the two-step process to redefine ‘Waters of the U.S.’ and we are committed to moving through this re-evaluation to quickly provide regulatory certainty, in a way that is thoughtful, transparent, and collaborative with other agencies and the public.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

In the interim, EPA and the Army Corps finalized a rule to postpone the applicability date of the 2015 WOTUS rule until February 6, 2020. This postponement provides regulatory certainty, will allow EPA to reevaluate the 2015 rule, and ensure the status quo is maintained until that process is complete.



Administrator Pruitt addresses members of the Tennessee Farm Bureau in Franklin, Tenn.



Administrator Pruitt talks with members of Nevada, Iowa Future Farmers of America.

Water Infrastructure

Our nation’s water infrastructure is in dire need of repair. Roughly 700 water main breaks occur across the U.S. every day – over 200,000 annually. Not surprisingly, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave our nation’s drinking water, wastewater, and hazardous waste infrastructure a “D” grade.

Then there’s the problem of lead in our drinking water. EPA has taken important steps to support the State of Michigan in Flint’s recovery and improve water infrastructure across the nation.

Flint, Michigan

In March 2017, EPA awarded a \$100 million grant to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to accelerate and expand its work to replace lead service lines and make other critical infrastructure improvements. Later in the year, EPA completed a periodic review of Michigan’s drinking water program and released a report identifying key steps the state should take to ensure they are providing safe and clean drinking water.

In addition, EPA concurred with Michigan’s plans to forgive Flint’s past drinking water debt. Over the past year, EPA has worked in

partnership with the State of Michigan and the City of Flint to ensure that water quality continues to improve. This partnership has produced one of the most robust drinking water data sets in the country. EPA remains committed to working closely with the State of Michigan, Flint and local partners to protect public health and ensure that Flint's water quality continues to remain safe to drink.

BY THE NUMBERS:

\$100 Million grant to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

\$1 Billion will be leveraged from WIFIA loans for water infrastructure upgrades

\$5.1 Billion in total water infrastructure investment estimated to be spurred from EPA grants and loans

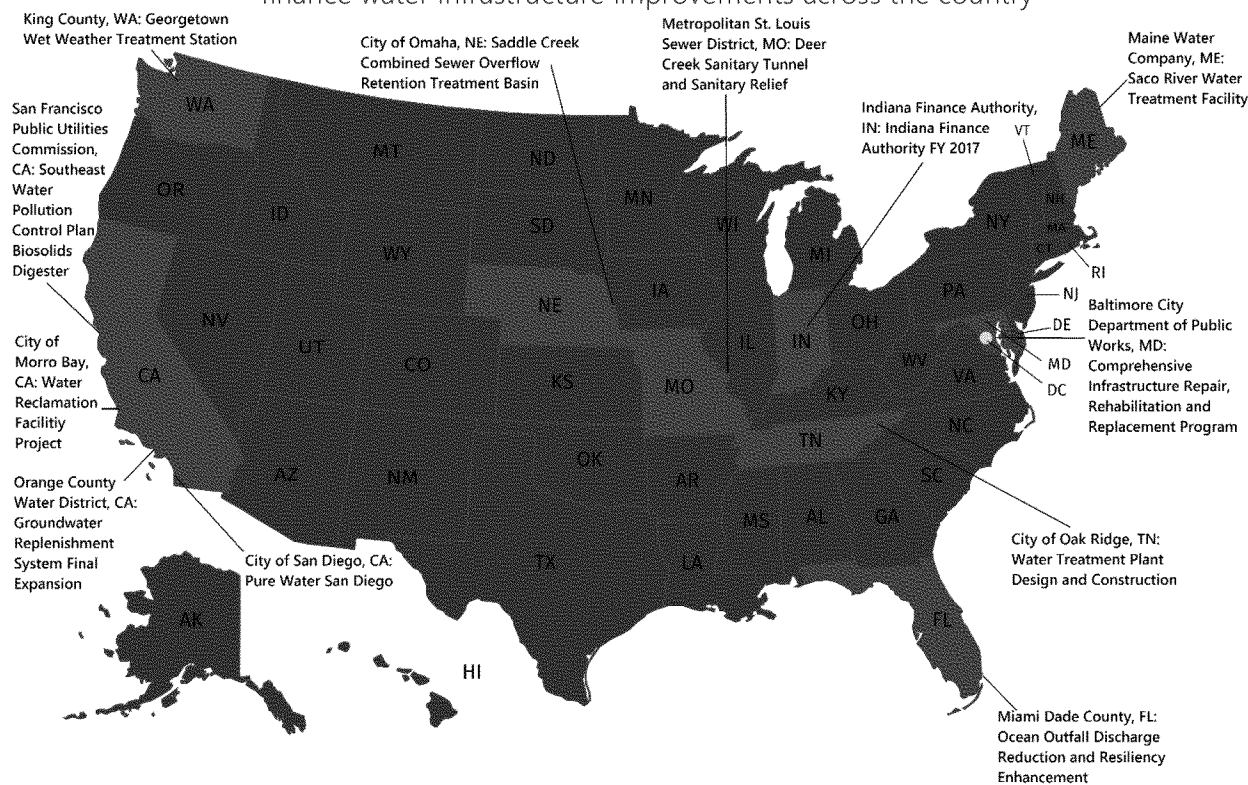
WIFIA

Critical to improving the nation's water infrastructure is the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA). The selected projects – once finalized – will leverage more than \$1 billion in private capital and other funding sources, including EPA's State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans, to help finance a total of \$5.1 billion in water infrastructure investments.

Stream Electric Effluent Limitations Guidelines Rule

After careful reconsideration, EPA finalized a rule postponing certain compliance dates by two years for the effluent limitations guidelines and standards for steam electric power plants under the Clean Water Act. It had been estimated to cost an average of \$480 million annually including \$1.2 billion annually during the first five years of compliance.

From wastewater and drinking water to storm water and water recycling projects, WIFIA loans will finance water infrastructure improvements across the country



LAND: Revitalize Land for Reuse

Superfund

The number of toxic sites being added to EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) has increased under every administration since the first list was released under President Ronald Reagan. By the end of 2018, EPA will be on track to delete from the NPL, in whole or part, over 20 Superfund sites.

Ensuring the Superfund program and EPA's land and water cleanup efforts operate effectively and efficiently is a cornerstone of the Agency's core mission. In elevating EPA's focus on Superfund cleanup, Administrator Pruitt created a Superfund Task Force – comprised of Agency experts from the Office of Land and Emergency Management, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Office of General Counsel, and Regional Offices – to streamline and improve the program.

Within a few months, the Superfund Task Force released its report providing 42 specific and detailed recommendations under the following overarching goals:

1. **Expediting Cleanup and Remediation**
2. **Re-Invigorating Responsible Party Cleanup and Reuse**
3. **Encouraging Private Investment**
4. **Promoting Redevelopment and Community Revitalization**
5. **Engaging Partners and Stakeholders**

Following the recommendations of the Superfund Task Force, Administrator Pruitt released two dynamic lists of Superfund sites on the NPL including an initial set of 21 sites targeted for immediate and intense attention and 31 sites with the greatest expected redevelopment and commercial potential.

East Chicago, Indiana:

As one of his first acts in office, Administrator Pruitt visited the USS Lead Superfund Site in East Chicago, Ind., a site that was listed on the NPL in 2009. In meetings with East Chicago residents, and federal, state, and local offices, he pledged improved coordination and communications as cleanup continues. The site is now on Administrator Pruitt's list of sites targeted for immediate and intense action.

West Lake, Missouri:

On February 1, 2018, after decades of inaction, EPA put forth its proposed plan to clean up the West Lake Landfill, a dumping ground for radioactive waste from the Manhattan Project. The plan calls for the removal of a majority of the most radiologically impacted material.

"We've gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it's time that we have direction," said Karen Nickel of the Just Moms St. Louis advocacy group. ([St. Louis' CBS Radio](#), 02/01/18)

San Jacinto, Texas:

The cleanup plan to address highly toxic dioxin contamination at the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site in Harris County was approved by Administrator Pruitt in the fall of 2017. By permanently addressing risks posed by the contamination, the plan provides certainty to both people living near the site and economic interests, including the businesses that rely on the San Jacinto River for navigation and the Interstate-10 transportation corridor.

"Not long after Hurricane Harvey battered Houston last summer, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt stood on the banks of the San Jacinto River and surveyed a decades-old toxic waste site as divers checked whether the storm had unearthed dangerous chemicals. Days later, he ordered two corporations to spend \$115 million to excavate the contamination rather than leaving it covered." ([Washington Post](#), 01/23/18)

The first Superfund list includes sites that will **benefit from Administrator Pruitt's direct** engagement and have identifiable actions to protect human health and the environment. These are sites requiring timely resolution of specific issues to expedite cleanup and redevelopment efforts. Ultimately, this list is designed to spur action at sites where opportunities exist to act quickly and comprehensively.

Superfund redevelopment will help countless communities reclaim and reuse thousands of acres of formerly contaminated land. The redevelopment list easily directs interested developers and potential owners to some Superfund sites with redevelopment potential.

In 2017, EPA completed deletion activities at seven sites on the Superfund NPL in **Administrator Pruitt's first year, up from two in 2016.** These sites, spanning from Minnesota and Massachusetts to Wyoming and Nebraska, **reflect Administrator Pruitt's commitment to** accelerating progress, reducing risks at Superfund sites, and returning sites to productive use.

CERCLA Hardrock Mining

In January 2017, the previous administration proposed regulations under section 108(b) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) that would have imposed additional financial responsibility requirements on certain hardrock mining facilities. After careful analysis of nearly 11,000 public comments, EPA announced in December 2017 that it would not finalize the proposed requirements. The risks associated **with these facilities' operations are already** addressed by existing federal and state programs and requirements and industry practice. Finalizing these requirements would have cost American businesses and the mining industry up to \$171 million annually.

"I urged then President-elect Trump to stop the EPA's overreach into state regulation harming Montana businesses. Instead of threatening the very industries that are a backbone of our Western economies, we need to support American families and American businesses to secure our mineral and energy independence. I am pleased the EPA has taken action."

**- U.S. Senate Western Caucus
Chairman Steve Daines (R-MT)**

Coal Ash

EPA's core mission reflects the belief that states play an integral role in environmental protection. In keeping with this notion, Administrator Pruitt provided Agency guidance to states for implementing state permitting programs to manage the safe disposal of coal combustion residuals (CCR), also known as **"coal ash."** **The new state permitting authority –** included in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act – allows flexibility in individual CCR permits that better reflect their environment and the continued beneficial use of coal ash.

EPA released this guidance to help states develop and submit permit programs that will put more states on track to obtain EPA approval of their CCR permitting program. **The guidance outlines a framework of EPA's** expected approval process and also provides checklists to aid states as they develop their programs.

CHEMICALS: Ensure Safety of Chemicals

Implemented the Updated Toxic Substances Control Act

EPA is working diligently to properly implement the 2016 Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which amended the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), and ensure that the most modern and safe chemicals get to market quickly in order to provide regulatory certainty for manufacturers and confidence for American consumers.

Under the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act – the first major update to an environmental statute in 20 years – EPA is responsible for reviewing and approving the safety of new chemicals intent on entering the U.S. marketplace. When Administrator Pruitt was confirmed, over 600 new chemicals were stuck in review. Within four months of being confirmed, EPA halved the backlog of new chemical submissions being reviewed under TSCA, and by August, Administrator Pruitt effectively eliminated the backlog.

In addition, EPA exceeded expectations and met its statutory responsibilities under TSCA on time and the one-year anniversary of the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act. This included issuing three new framework rules, providing a guidance document for external parties, and releasing the scoping documents for the first 10 risk evaluations, under a reformed TSCA.

Chlorpyrifos

In 2007, EPA received a petition asking the Agency to revoke the tolerances for the pesticide chlorpyrifos. In March 2017, EPA denied the petition citing that: the Ninth Circuit would not provide additional time to review the issue; there were divergent views from cabinet departments; and the scheduled FIFRA

pesticide review process would be transparent, and allow more time to further evaluate the science.

On July 18, 2017, the Ninth Circuit ruled in **EPA's favor, refusing to short-circuit** the process established by Congress to challenge a denial of a petition to revoke a tolerance, affording EPA additional time to conduct a proper evaluation of the science and the studies on chlorpyrifos and provide greater certainty **about the pesticide's safety to the** American people.

Dicamba

On October 13, 2017, EPA reached an agreement with manufacturers on measures to further minimize the potential for dicamba drift to damage neighboring crops. New requirements for the use of dicamba "over the top" (application to growing plants) will allow farmers to make informed choices for seed purchases for the 2018 growing season. EPA worked cooperatively with states, land-grant universities, and pesticide manufacturers to examine the underlying causes of recent crop damage in certain regions and reach an agreement that will provide regulatory certainty for farmers.

TSCA MILESTONES:

- ☐ Swiftly implemented the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act updates to TSCA
- ☐ Finalized 3 new framework rules
- ☐ Released scoping documents for first 10 risk evaluations
- ☐ Provided guidance on risk evaluation process
- ☐ Proposed final framework rule on TSCA fees

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of environmental protection laws is sustained by collaborative efforts of states, businesses, private citizens, and federal agencies like EPA. Within the last year, Administrator Pruitt implemented a two-pronged approach to enforcement: 1) ensuring the regulated community understands and complies with the law, and 2) vigorously holding bad actors accountable. This was achieved through a wide range of enforcement tools, including: compliance assistance, civil actions, administrative actions, informal actions, work-sharing with states, criminal fines, and incarceration where appropriate.

The Seattle Times

Amazon, EPA Reach \$1.2 Million Settlement Over Online Sales of Illegal Pesticides

"Seattle-based Amazon has agreed to pay more than \$1.2 million in administrative penalties as part of an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that the agency says will protect consumers from hazards of illegal and misbranded pesticides sold by the online retail giant..."

"The penalty was one of the largest ever of its kind by the agency..."

"[A]s a result of the settlement, Amazon has indicated it is now 'committed to closely monitoring and removing illegal pesticides from its website,' [EPA Region 10 Administrator Chris] Hladick said in the agency's news release."

BY THE NUMBERS:

From January 20, 2017 through the end of FY17, EPA and the U.S. Department of Justice imposed:

- More than \$1.72 billion in civil penalties, cost recovery, natural resource damages, and other monetary recoveries;
- More than \$2.91 billion in criminal fines, restitution, and other assessments; and
- More than \$3.13 billion in injunctive relief and environmental mitigation projects.

Enforcement Actions Announced Since Close of FY17:

- ExxonMobil: \$300 million air pollution settlement with Exxon, 10/31/17
- PDC Energy: EPA, Colorado reached \$21 million-plus settlement with PDC, 10/31/17
- Indiana Harbor Coke Company: Settled with EPA and agreed to reduce annual emissions of pollutants from their coke ovens by 2,075 tons, 1/25/18
- Superfunds: In one case, EPA held 40 parties responsible to finance and perform a \$51.5 million EPA-approved cleanup, 10/13/17
- Silver Bow Creek Butte Area Superfund site: Reached an agreement in principle with responsible parties after languishing on the NPL for more than 35 years, 1/26/18
- Middletown, Ohio: EPA entered into agreement with the city to address the discharge of millions of gallons untreated sewage into the Great Miami River and Hydraulic Canal, 2/12/18

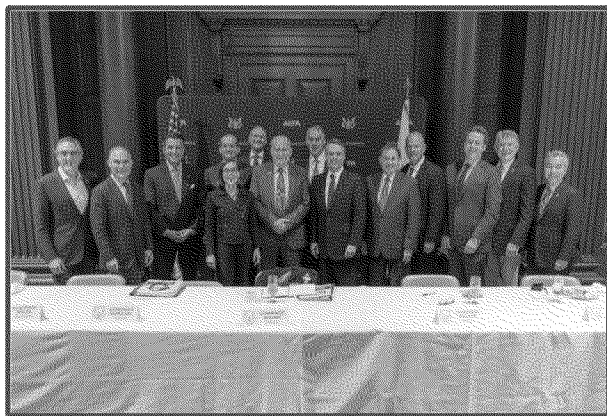
Cooperative Federalism and Public Participation

Under Administrator Pruitt's leadership, states are once again being treated as partners in efforts to protect the environment. In his first year, Administrator Pruitt worked to empower state and local partners to develop regulations that achieve positive environmental outcomes. Putting his words into action, Administrator Pruitt got out of Washington and heard directly from stakeholders in 30 states and territories.



Enhanced Shared Accountability

Governor Steve Bullock (D-MT): "The change in the federal administration offers us as governors the opportunity to develop new relationships and to build stronger state and federal relationships."



Administrator Pruitt meets with the bipartisan Western Governors Association with U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta and U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.



Governor Rick Scott (R-FL): "It is great to have a partner in Administrator Pruitt and the Trump Administration and I am glad to see their focus on protecting Florida's environment for future generations."

Governor Mark Dayton (D-MN): "Gov. Mark Dayton described a meeting Wednesday with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as 'productive and cordial' and said he's hopeful the Trump administration will eliminate some of the federal government red tape dealt to state agencies. 'We don't believe we need to be micromanaged by Region 5 in Chicago,' Dayton said during a news conference following a meeting at the Capitol that lasted more than an hour."

Governor Kim Reynolds (R-IA): "The governor said Pruitt indicated the new regulations would define what areas are not under federal jurisdiction. A court suspended the 'Waters of the U.S.' rules written by the Obama Administration before they took effect, but Reynolds said farmers delayed conservation measures and other land improvements because of the uncertainty about what might come next, which 'Dramatically had an impact on our ability to move forward with conservation practices for not only water quality, for soil health,' she said."

Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): "It's great to have an administrator of the EPA," McConnell said as he introduced Pruitt, "who's not afraid to come to Kentucky."



Administrator Pruitt hosts U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan and other members of the *President's Task Force on Environmental Risks and Safety Risks to Children* to address childhood lead exposure.

Stakeholder Engagement

Smart Sectors

In October 2017, EPA launched Smart Sectors, a voluntary partnership program between the Agency and regulated sectors that takes a collaborative approach to consider more forward-thinking ways to protect the environment and provide regulatory certainty. **Since the program's official launch, the Smart Sectors team met with over 80 trade associations, companies, or stakeholder groups.** The team conducted seven informational site visits with a variety of sectors including ports, iron and steel, oil and gas, chemical manufacturing, and agriculture and has many site visits planned for 2018. The Smart Sectors program maintains open dialogue with these partners and their environmental committees and is developing reports that profile the impact of each sector on the environment and the economy.



"The American Wood Council supports a smarter, more sensible and cost-effective regulatory process, such as the approach taken by EPA's Smart Sectors Program."

- Robert Glowinski, President and CEO of the American Wood Council

Grants

EPA awards over \$4 billion grants annually to states, tribes, and local communities. In FY17:

- \$20.2 million was provided through National Estuary Program grants to 32 communities
- \$56.8 million in Brownfields grants to 172 communities for revitalizing land
- \$33 million Clean Diesel Program grants to 72 communities

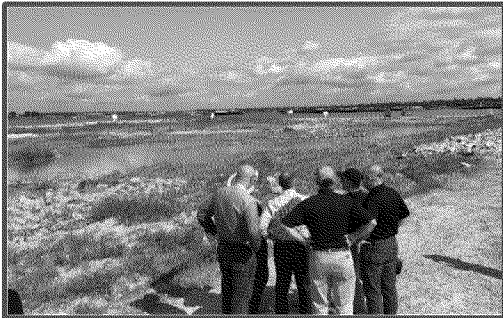
HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS

- EPA awarded \$1.2 million in competitive grants to 36 local-based community and tribal organizations for community-driven solutions to local health and environmental issues in minority, low-income, and tribal communities.
- EPA Announces \$7.2 Million in Brownfields Grants to Promote Economic Redevelopment Across the Pacific Southwest
- EPA Awards \$2.6 Million to Cut Diesel Emissions in New York and New Jersey
- EPA Awards \$4.4 Million to Restore Lake Champlain and Protect Against Harmful Algal Blooms
- EPA Awards \$173.5 million for California Drinking Water and Wastewater Projects
- EPA Awards \$32 Million for Tribal Environmental Programs in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest

Natural Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Throughout 2017, EPA worked closely with states and territories to prepare for and respond to a number of natural disasters including: Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and catastrophic wildfires in the West.

As a result of the continuing impacts on Gulf Coast-area refineries and disruption to the fuel distribution system caused by the 2017 hurricanes, Administrator Pruitt acted quickly to **exercise EPA's emergency fuel waiver** authority to help ensure adequate supply of fuel throughout the country by approving emergency fuel waivers for 38 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. **Governors across the country praised EPA's quick actions**, which ensured there was no disruption in the fuel supply for power generators, evacuations and emergency response efforts.



Administrator Pruitt traveled to Houston, Texas to review the Agency's response efforts and meet with stakeholders monitoring cleanup efforts at the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund site (pictured above).

In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Administrator Pruitt joined President Trump in **Puerto Rico to review the Agency's response efforts**. EPA focused its efforts on environmental impacts and potential threats to human health in the affected areas by coordinating with local governments in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) to assess the conditions of drinking water, which includes sampling, analysis and lab support, and getting wastewater treatment systems up and running.

STATS AT A GLANCE

Hurricane Harvey:

- ❑ Conducted on-site assessments at approximately 625 drinking water and 440 wastewater treatment facilities
- ❑ Collected more than 1,000 orphan containers, which included drums and tanks found floated in or washed up near waterways
- ❑ Safely disposed of over 20 million cubic yards of debris

Hurricane Irma:

- ❑ Reviewed and secured 23 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico and USVI and 80 sites from Miami to North Carolina
- ❑ Extended fuel waiver for 38 states and D.C.

Hurricane Maria:

- ❑ Completed over 1,000 drinking water assessments in USVI
- ❑ Collected more than 225,000 items of household hazardous waste, goods and electronic waste in Puerto Rico and USVI
- ❑ Assessed close to 400 vessels in Puerto Rico and 500 in USVI with the U.S. Coast Guard



Rick Scott
@FLGovScott

Following ▾

.@EPA has approved an emergency fuel waiver, allowing more fuel to enter FL quickly for #HurricaneIrma prep: bit.ly/2j6apgC

9:14 PM - 6 Sep 2017

Rule of Law

Agency Reform

Sue and Settle

Over the years, special interest groups skirted the regulatory process by using lawsuits that seek to force federal agencies – especially EPA – to issue regulations that advance their interests and priorities, on their specified **timeframe**. During this process, known as “**sue and settle**,” EPA would get sued by an outside party that asked the court to compel the Agency to take certain steps, either through change in a statutory duty or enforcing timelines set by the law, and then EPA would acquiesce through a consent decree or **settlement agreement**, affecting the Agency’s obligations under the statute.

“The days of regulation through litigation are over. We will no longer go behind closed doors and use consent decrees and settlement agreements to resolve lawsuits filed against the Agency by special interest groups where doing so would circumvent the regulatory process set forth by Congress. Additionally, gone are the days of routinely paying tens of thousands of dollars in attorney’s fees to these groups with which we swiftly settle.”

- EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt

“Sue and settle” cases establish Agency obligations without participation by states and/or the regulated community; foreclose meaningful public participation in rulemaking; effectively force the Agency to reach certain regulatory outcomes; and, cost the American taxpayer millions of dollars.

In fulfilling his promise to end the practice of regulation through litigation that has harmed

the American public, EPA Administrator Pruitt issued an Agency-wide directive in October **2017 designed to end “sue and settle” practices** within the Agency, providing an unprecedented level of public participation and transparency in EPA litigation, in addition to consent decrees and settlement agreements.

Advisory Committees

EPA’s Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) provide invaluable, independent scientific advice to the Agency. However, according to EPA calculations, in just three years, members **of three of EPA’s FACs** – the Science Advisory Board (SAB), Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), and the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) – received upwards of \$77 million in direct EPA grant funding while concurrently serving on these committees.

Administrator Pruitt’s directive ensures that **EPA’s FACs provide a diverse and independent** range of perspectives. Members serving on an EPA FAC shall not simultaneously receive grants from the Agency. In addition, Administrator Pruitt called for more geographic diversity, more frequent rotation in membership, and greater involvement by state, local, and tribal officials. The new membership for SAB, CASAC, and BOSC hails from over 40 states and D.C., compared to the prior total of 30 states and D.C. EPA received more than 700 applications from interested individuals **throughout the country to serve on EPA’s** science boards.

Media Highlights

EDITORIALS

The Wall Street Journal: **Pruitt's ends sue and settle practices also known as 'extortion by environmental lawsuit.'** "Scott Pruitt continues to press reform at the Environmental Protection Agency, this week issuing a directive to curb the collusive Washington game of "sue and settle" lawsuits. This is a victory for democratic consent over legal extortion." (10/18/17)

The Wall Street Journal: **Pruitt's clean power break.** "The Trump Administration is giving the economy a boost with its deregulatory agenda, and the latest example comes Tuesday when Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt will propose to repeal the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan. Ending this power grab will uphold the letter of the law and restore cooperative federalism with the states." (10/08/17)

Washington Examiner: **Praise for Pruitt's commitment to the Agency's core mission.** "We applaud Pruitt's mission of restoring the EPA to its proper shape and size. And we hope he has the humility, the diligence, and the skill to pull it off, for the sake of the Constitution, the economy, and the environment." (09/18/17)



Denver Post: Pruitt Right to Pursue Funds for Gold King Mine Victims. "Scott Pruitt, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, is doing the right thing in his efforts to make whole the victims of the Gold King Mine spill that spewed 3 million of gallons of toxic water into the Animas River and downstream to New Mexico." (08/18/17)

Tulsa World: Pruitt gets out of Washington and 'talks to ordinary Americans.' "We prefer it when the people at the top of the nation's bureaucratic pyramid get out of the Beltway once in a while to talk to ordinary Americans. If Pruitt is coming home to see his friends, family, neighbors and some of the people he regulates, then good for him. That sounds like the acts of a balanced man who wants to know the thinking of the public, not just the pro-regulation lobbyists." (07/30/17)

The Oklahoman: Pruitt meets with stakeholders, including energy industry. "...the fact Pruitt regularly corresponded and dealt with energy industry officials as attorney general of a state where energy is the No. 1 industry should not be surprising nor should it, by itself, be considered nefarious." (06/21/17)

The Wall Street Journal: Cleaning up the Superfund mess. "One cost of making climate change a religion is that more immediate environmental problems have been ignored—not least by the Environmental Protection Agency. New EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt plans to address that in an underreported effort to clean up toxic waste sites under the so-called Superfund program." (06/12/17)

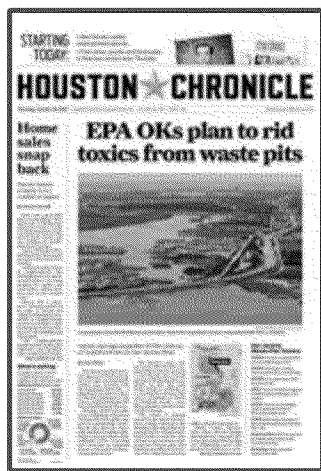
The Wall Street Journal: Highway from the endangerment zone. "Mr. Pruitt is a natural target for the left, but when conservatives are impugning one of the leaders of President Trump's economic deregulation project as a

sellout, maybe the problem is the critics, not Mr. Pruitt.” (04/18/17)

Tulsa World: Congratulations, Scott Pruitt. “Pruitt is a serious, intelligent man who has worked hard for the people of Oklahoma. Like most Oklahomans, he is a genuine conservative. He has taken seriously his promises to voters that he would resist federal intrusions on state authority and personal freedom, and anyone who is surprised by that must not have been paying attention.” (02/21/17)

ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT’S OP-EDs

USA Today: Clean air, land and water: Time for the EPA to start keeping its promises. “A few months ago, I promised the people of Missouri that I would make a decision and propose a cleanup plan for the West Lake Landfill. Recently, I made good on that commitment. On Feb. 1, the Environmental Protection Agency put forth its plan to clean up the West Lake Landfill... In less than a year, this administration will solve a problem that previous administrations could not fix in the years since 1990, when the site was added to the Superfund priorities list.” (02/14/18)



The Washington Times: Paving the path to U.S. energy dominance. “An energy-dominant America will export to markets around the world, increasing our global leadership and

influence. Becoming energy dominant means that we are getting government out of the way so that we can share our energy wealth with developing nations. For years, Washington stood in the way of our energy dominance. **That changes now.**” (06/26/17)

The Washington Times: EPA is putting American workers first. “Americans who want a healthy and clean environment expect lawful, effective and economically sound regulation — the Clean Power Plan failed on all three counts. EPA can and should now focus on getting real results in the fight for clean air, land and water.” (05/01/17)

USA Today: **We’re protecting jobs and the environment.** “There’s a phrase I’ve used often over the past several weeks — ‘The future ain’t what it used to be.’ After my first full month serving as administrator to the Environmental Protection Agency, there’s no question times are changing...” (03/20/17)

NATIONAL TV

Christian Broadcast Network: Unraveling the ‘Weaponization’ of the EPA is Top Priority for Scott Pruitt. “Actions taken by the executive branch were really actions that the legislative branch should have been taking or addressing and it impacted liberty,” said Pruitt. “When you declare a ‘war on coal’ from a regulatory perspective, the question has to be asked: where’s that in the statute? Where did Congress empower the EPA to declare a war on coal?... There’s a role for the EPA. There’s a very important role for the agency. The problem is in the last several years that role has been morphed into something it’s not,” he added.” (02/26/18)

Fox News’ Justice with Judge Jeanine: Scott Pruitt talks changes to the EPA under Trump. “When you think about the last year, \$8 billion in cost savings with the deregulatory effort

Administration-wide. In our agency alone, \$1 billion of cost savings.” (02/24/18)

CBS Evening News: Pruitt discussed the role of the EPA. “We should be about administering the statutes we’re required to administer, but we shouldn’t come in and say that the way forward in environmental protection is prohibition vs. stewardship. We can feed the world and we can power the world, and we should do that.” (01/18/18)

Reuters TV: Trump’s EPA aims to replace Obama-era climate, water regulations in 2018. “[Pruitt] said the agency was also planning to rewrite the Waters of the United States rule, another Obama-era regulation, this one defining which U.S. waterways are protected under federal law. Pruitt and Trump have said the rule marked an overreach by including streams that are shallow, narrow, or sometimes completely dry - and was choking off energy development.” (01/08/18)

MSNBC’s Morning Joe: Pruitt said the Paris agreement put our economy at a disadvantage. “When you look at what was agreed to in Paris, it put this country, our country, at a disadvantage economically.” (06/07/17)

NBC’s Meet the Press: Scott Pruitt: American carbon reductions predate Paris Climate Deal. “Paris is a bad deal for this country.” (06/05/17)

ABC’s This Week: Pruitt discussed how small businesses across the country are celebrating President Trump’s decision to pull out of the Paris agreement. “Well, when you look at, even *The New York Times* had an article, I think, within the last couple of days that talked about small business celebrating, euphoria with respect to the president’s decision.” (06/04/17)

Fox News Sunday: Pruitt explained how the U.S. is the energy technology leader of the world. “‘If China and India want to reduce their CO2 footprint, they should learn from us,’ Pruitt told Fox News’ Chris Wallace.” (06/04/17)

CNBC: EPA takes aim at CAFE standards. “We can be both pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-environment, says Scott Pruitt, EPA administrator, discussing the agency’s new agenda and plans to roll back regulations and tackle fuel standards.” (03/09/17)

NATIONAL PRINT

GQ Magazine: The 50 Most Powerful People in Trump’s Washington. “#5 EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt: In a Cabinet that doesn’t get much done, Pruitt has been dangerously effective.” (02/22/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt said West Lake sends a results-driven message. “‘This sends a message that we’re actually going to get results,’ Mr. Pruitt said. ‘Frankly it’s just what we ought to be doing.’” (02/01/18)

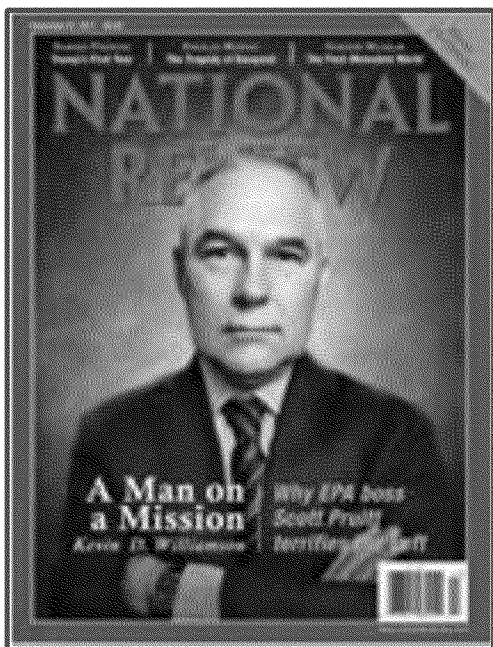
Washington Examiner: EPA’s Scott Pruitt declares ‘war on lead.’ “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has begun an effort to ‘eradicate’ lead poisoning from drinking water, more than three years after the crisis in Flint, Michigan, started. Pruitt hosted a meeting Jan. 8 for state and local officials at agency headquarters in Washington to obtain feedback on ways to update the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule ... It has not been revised in more than a decade.” (01/23/18)

Wall Street Journal: Pruitt aims to accelerate his efforts to remake the EPA. “Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt plans to use his second year on the job to accelerate efforts to remake the agency, saying he wants to speed its permitting processes and

transform a culture he says is bureaucratic.”
(01/17/18)

E&E News: Pruitt Meets with Moms Clean Air Force. **Dominique Browning** ... co-founder and senior director of Moms Clean Air Force, along with other officials from her organization, met last week with Pruitt and three members of his staff at EPA's Washington, D.C., headquarters ... “Browning said her impression of Pruitt was that he is ‘determined’ as well as ‘intense, aggressive and focused. And the other thing on my impression is [he is] really, really smart,’ she added.” (1/15/18)

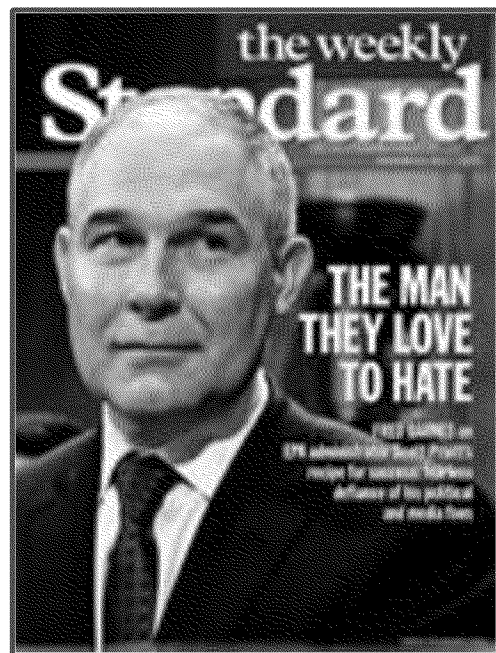
The Hill: EPA staffing falls to Reagan-era levels. “EPA’s staffing is now lower than it was in former President Reagan’s final year in office. An EPA spokeswoman said Tuesday that, as of Jan. 3, the agency had 14,162 employees, down from about 15,000 at the beginning of last year. That’s even lower than the 14,400 employees the agency had in fiscal year 1988, Reagan’s final year.” (01/09/18)



National Review: **Scott Pruitt’s Reformation.** “Stewardship, Pruitt says, is making responsible use of our national blessings, including our

natural resources: ‘Feed the world and fuel the world,’ he says, over and over. But the Left — and the EPA, which has long been dominated by it — is not interested in **stewardship**. It’s interested in prohibition, in a lot of Thou shalt and a whole heck of a lot more Thou shalt not. ‘You have two different approaches, two different worldviews, two very different sets of **assumptions**,’ Pruitt says.” (12/31/17)

The Washington Post: How Scott Pruitt turned the EPA into one of Trump’s most powerful tools. “... aggressiveness on issues from coal waste to vehicle emissions has made Pruitt one of Trump’s most high-profile and consequential Cabinet members. It also has made him one of the most controversial ... Yet, allies praise Pruitt for returning more power to individual states while scaling back what they see as the previous administration’s regulatory excesses.” (12/31/17)



The Weekly Standard: **The Man They Love to Hate.** “Pruitt lauded the president for his ‘unflinching **commitment to put America first**’ and followed with what has become the theme of his EPA tenure. The United States does ‘better than anyone in the world in striking the

balance between growing our economy, growing jobs while also being a good steward of our environment,' he said. Between 2000 and 2014, America reduced 'its carbon emissions by 18-plus percent. And this was accomplished not through government mandate, but accomplished through innovation and technology of the American private sector.'" (12/15/17)

Bloomberg: Administrator Pruitt lands on the list of 50 people defining global business in 2017. (11/30/17)

USA Today: Scott Pruitt on a mission to change the climate of the EPA. "He's on a mission to re-engineer the agency's culture by returning power to states and away from the Washington bureaucrats and coastal elites he said have led it astray." (11/26/17)

TIME: Inside Scott Pruitt's Mission to Remake the EPA. "Pruitt has pioneered a radically different approach to environmental regulation, weighing impact on job growth and the concerns of business groups on a level plane with environmental protection when the law allows." (10/26/17)

Bloomberg: EPA's Pruitt Vows to Get Tough on Polluters. "Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, vowed that he will get tough on corporate polluters, dismissing critics who cast him as too cozy with industry. 'They don't know me,' Pruitt said, during an interview with Bloomberg News in his Washington office. 'I've led a grand jury. We are going to do enforcement, to go after bad actors and go after polluters.'" (10/25/17)

The Daily Signal: Trump's EPA Chief Charts a New Course. "My job is to enforce the laws as passed by whom? Congress. They give me my authority. That's the jurisdictional responsibilities that I have, and when litigation

is used to regulate...that's abusive. That's wrong." (10/20/17)

TIME: Administrator Pruitt on Enforcement: "I don't spend any time with polluters. I prosecute polluters." (10/20/17)

Talking Points Memo: Pruitt Talks About New 'Sue and Settle' Policy. "Pruitt pledged that the agency would no longer reimburse attorneys' fees in cases where it decides to avoid a lawsuit, arguing that both environmental and business groups had abused it to enrich themselves in the past. 'This is not particular to one type of plaintiff,' he said. 'There should be no attorneys' fees paid, period, no matter who the plaintiff is.'" (10/16/17)

Fox News: EPA moves to repeal Obama's Clean Power Plan coal regulations. "'That rule really was about picking winners and losers,' Pruitt said. 'The past administration was unapologetic, they were using every bit of power, authority to use the EPA to pick winners and losers on how we pick electricity in this country. That is wrong.'" (10/09/17)

The New York Times: EPA Announces Repeal of Major Obama-era Carbon Emissions Rule. "Mr. Pruitt, who had signaled the move at an event with coal miners in eastern Kentucky on Monday, said in a news release that his predecessors had departed from regulatory norms in writing the Clean Power Plan, which was finalized in 2015 and would have pushed states to move away from coal in favor of sources of electricity that produce fewer carbon emissions." (10/09/17)

Politico Top 50: #9 Scott Pruitt. "Donald Trump's pledge to unravel Barack Obama's climate agenda may be—in the long run—the single most significant action he takes as president. And there's one man tasked with

turning Trump's rhetoric into reality: Scott Pruitt." (09/01/17)



The Daily Caller: EPA's Scott Pruitt: What was so great about Obama's environmental record? "Everyone looks at the Obama administration as being the environmental savior. Really? He was the environmental savior...Well, he left us with more Superfund sites than when he came in. He had Gold King [the 2015 mine wastewater spill] and Flint, Michigan [drinking water crisis]. He tried to regulate CO2 twice and flunked twice. Struck out. So what's so great about that record? I don't know." (09/13/17)

Washington Examiner: Pruitt advances Back-to-Basics agenda. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity." (09/13/17)

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA workforce approaching lowest levels since Reagan. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs." (09/06/17)

The Washington Examiner: Scott Pruitt criticizes Obama as 'environmental savior,' moves EPA away from climate change. "Few Trump administration agency chiefs have moved as decisively to implement an agenda as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and he's quite clear about what he wants to do. He calls it a 'back to the basics' agenda, removing the government from what he considers extraneous activity — namely, the climate change battle taken up by former President Barack Obama, who he questioned as an "environmental savior." (09/13/17)

Reuters: Pruitt gave a wide-ranging interview about protecting the environment and American jobs. "The past administration was all about words. This administration is all about action. Look at the actions this country has taken. We have reduced our greenhouse gas levels to pre-1994 levels primarily through technology and innovation, not through government mandate. We have nothing to be apologetic about with the rest of the world." (07/11/17)

Wall Street Journal: EPA to Unveil New Chemical Testing Rules. "The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday will release new rules to clarify the agency's process of testing the chemicals used in everyday products and other commerce, a matter of deep importance to manufacturers, consumers and environmental advocates." (06/22/17)

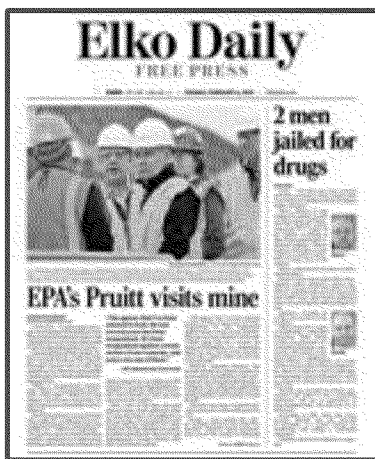
The Daily Caller: Trump Delays One of the Most Expensive EPA Regulations Ever. "The Trump administration announced Tuesday evening it would delay the implementation of a smog rule that's been called one of the costliest clean air regulations ever." (06/07/17)

The Washington Post: EPA head Scott Pruitt defends Paris exit. "When we joined Paris, the

rest of the world applauded ... because it put this country at disadvantage... It's a bad deal for this country. We're going to make sure as we make deals we're going to put the interests of America first." (06/04/17)

The Washington Post: Scott Pruitt, outspoken and forceful, moves to the center of power within the Trump administration. **"Less than four months ago, Scott Pruitt arrived in Washington with few connections to President Trump's inner circle and took the helm of an agency where many employees were openly hostile to him. But the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has emerged as one of the most influential policy architects in the president's Cabinet, a skilled and sometimes brash lawyer who is methodically taking apart a slew of regulations and agreements affecting a range of issues, from manufacturing operations to landfills."** (06/02/17)

Need to Know Network: Pruitt promises to put states back in the driver's seat on regulations. **"Pruitt said during the interview that the Obama administration used the authority of Washington to walk over the states, and looked at states as mere vessels of federal will."** (05/11/17)



The Hill: **EPA seeks governors' input in rewriting Obama water rule. "EPA is restoring**

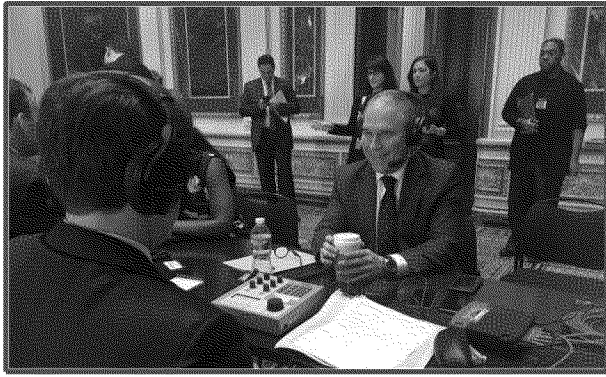
states' important role in the regulation of water,' Pruitt said in a statement. **'Like President Trump, I believe that we need to work with our state governments to understand what they think is the best way to protect their waters, and what actions they are already taking to do so. We want to return to a regulatory partnership, rather than regulate by executive fiat.'** (05/09/17)

The Washington Examiner: EPA Head Pruitt: We hear **East Chicago's concerns 'loud and clear.'** "Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt visited East Chicago on Wednesday to assure residents, state and local leaders that Washington is meeting its commitments to protect citizens from lead **contamination. 'Their concerns were heard** loud and clear, and I am committed to ensuring that the EPA works with our federal, state and local partners to find solutions that **protect the health and safety of East Chicago,'** Pruitt said." (04/19/17)

The Wall Street Journal: **Scott Pruitt's Back-to-Basics Agenda for the EPA. "You might call him an EPA originalist... When Mr. Pruitt sat down Thursday for his first interview since his November nomination, he spent most of the time waxing enthusiastic about all the good his agency can accomplish once he refocuses it on its statutorily defined mission: working cooperatively with the states to improve water and air quality."** (02/17/17)

NATIONAL RADIO & PODCAST

The Daily Signal Podcast: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt explains how the Agency has changed under President Trump's leadership. **"The weaponization of the Environmental Protection agency is over,' says Administrator Scott Pruitt."** (02/26/18)



The New York Times' 'The Daily': Pruitt discusses how he's focused on protecting the environment and human health. **"The role of a regulator is to make things regular. To take a statue, to use its authority, to fairly enforce it."** (02/02/18)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on 'so called' Clean Power Plan. **"For the first time ever, the EPA took its authority and said we can dictate, really coerce states and utility companies across the country and tell them how to generate electricity. You know, when you look at how we generate electricity in this country, we obviously use multiple energy sources."** (10/11/17)



ABC News "Powerhouse Politics Podcast:" Scott Pruitt talks about Hurricane Irma recovery efforts. **"There's many issues, from drinking water to Superfund to debris management and landfills, that we're dealing with in this kind of situation."** (09/08/17)

Fox News' Brian Kilmeade Show: EPA Chairman Scott Pruitt on potential ramifications of pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement. **"We are leading the world now, we are at pre-1994 levels with our CO-2 footprint, not because of Paris, not because of a government mandate but because of innovation and technology. For those who say we are going to lose our seat at the table, we are the United States, we don't lose our seat at the table."** (05/19/17)

The Hugh Hewitt Show: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on new direction for science boards at the EPA. **"You know, Hugh, as you know, the board of scientific counselors that we have at the EPA, they serve three year terms. And so those are reviewed every three years. Those same individuals can apply through the competitive process. And what's really been emphasized by Congress as I went through the confirmation process is geographical representation, because you want to ensure as you're dealing with rulemaking – air, water, whatever rulemaking we're doing, that the geographical uniqueness of our country as we're patching rules is taken in consideration."** (05/11/17)

REGIONAL MEDIA

Reno KRNK-TV: Pruitt discusses his visit to Nevada. **"Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt sat down with News 4's Bill Frankmore on Monday morning to discuss his event with Governor Brian Sandoval at Anaconda Mine in Lyon County regarding future clean-up and his visit with miners at Coeur Rochester Mine in Lovelock."** (02/05/18)



The St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Pruitt outlined his course of action to cleanup West Lake. "In a long-awaited decision that appears to be a compromise, the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday recommended partial excavation of the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton to remove radioactive waste linked to the Manhattan Project." (02/01/18)

St. Louis KMOX-TV: Just Moms STL was happy with Pruitt's decision regarding West Lake. "Dawn Chapman and Karen Nickel of the Just Moms STL advocacy group say at first, the group was worried a partial removal would mean only 5percent removed. With a 70percent or more removal — they are pleased. 'I can tell you that we are happy with this decision, and what this does for us is it gives us direction,' Nickel says. 'We've gone without a decision at the site for 10 years, and it's time that we have direction.'" (02/01/18)

Cedar Rapids Gazette: Pruitt wants to work hand in hand with states. "'What's important for us in Washington, D.C., to do is to learn and partner and work with folks at the state level to achieve good outcomes together. That just simply has not happened for a number of years,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, during a stop in Nevada." (12/01/17)

Des Moines Register: Pruitt called farmers the first "conservationists, environmentalists."

"Pruitt said the country needed to discuss what 'true environmentalism' means: 'We have been blessed with a bounty of natural resources. And some view that as 'We should simply not use them' — that we should put up fences and not use our natural resources. 'I don't buy that. We, as a country, have an obligation to feed the world and power the world,' he said, getting applause. 'When you have the natural resources like we do, we should use them to benefit our neighbors, our country and world.'" (12/01/17)

Louisville WHAS-TV: Pruitt will have changes to Obama's WOTUS. "The head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency was in Louisville Thursday with a promise of change to one of the most controversial environmental regulations for Kentucky farmers. Administrator Scott Pruitt told the Kentucky Farm Bureau's 98th Annual Meeting that the "Waters of the United States" regulation will be changed forever by mid-2018." (12/01/17)

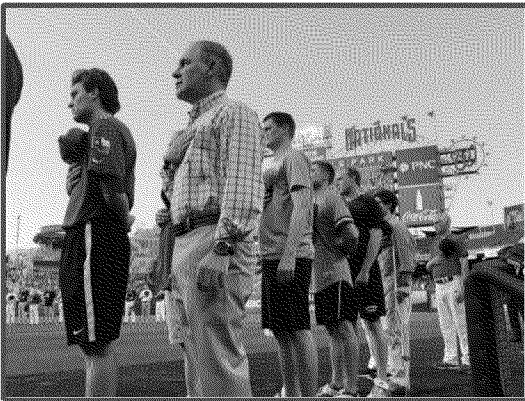
The Chicago Tribune: Pruitt orders companies blamed for East Chicago contamination to pay for cleanup. "'We continue to make cleaning up East Chicago a priority, to protect the health and well-being of the residents who live in the impacted areas,' said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in a statement. The EPA estimated the companies will have to pay \$24 million for the remediation, according to the announcement, and \$2.25 million for the indoor dust cleaning.'" (10/18/17)



The Clarion Ledger: Pruitt addressed energy issues in Mississippi. “**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt** visited Mississippi Thursday to discuss proposed changes to the Waters of the United States rule, just days after announcing the **repeal of the Clean Power Plan.**” (10/13/17)

Houston Chronicle: After Harvey, Pruitt vows bold response to polluted sites around Houston. “**Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt**, who has visited Texas twice since Hurricane Harvey, vowed **Thursday to have ‘an answer’ by next month** for a permanent solution to clean up the **San Jacinto River Waste Pits.**” (09/22/17)

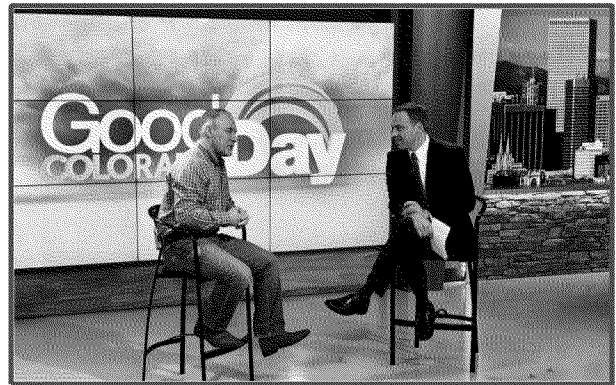
Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA chief, a former **baseball exec**, wants ‘world, world series.’ “I think baseball is one of those sports we can actually truly have a world series, we can have a world competition. We’ve seen it in other instances and I think that’s an opportunity that we need to be pursuing.” (08/14/17)



Administrator Pruitt stands for the National Anthem at the Congressional Baseball game on June 15, 2017.

Des Moines WHO-TV: EPA Head Agrees That Des Moines Superfund Site Needs to Develop, But When? “**Political Director Dave Price** talked to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt about efforts to redevelop superfund sites, like Des Moines, all over the country.” (08/08/17)

Radio Iowa: Pruitt visits Iowa to discuss WOTUS. “**Pruitt said his goal is to provide ‘regulatory clarity’ with a new rule**, so property owners will know where federal jurisdiction begins and ends. ‘If you want to build a pond on your land,’ Pruitt said, ‘if you have natural springs on your land and you want to want to water your livestock and build (a retention) pond. .and you’re not really sure whether if you do that you’re going to be subject to \$37,000-plus a day in fines if you don’t get a permit and you find it out five years from now, what does that mean? You don’t build the pond or you don’t build the subdivision or you don’t use your land the way you want.’” (08/08/17)



Denver KDVR-TV: Pruitt Gold King Mine on 2-Year Anniversary of Spill Caused by Agency. “**Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt** and Colorado leaders will tour the site of the Gold King mine spill on Friday to mark the second anniversary of the spill that dumped 3 million gallons of **tainted wastewater into the Animas River.**” (08/04/17)

Arkansas Democrat Gazette: Pruitt discusses WOTUS in Arkansas. “**EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt** visited with Arkansas Cabinet officials and agriculture representatives Thursday about changes they would like to see made to the **nation’s definition of protected water bodies.**” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star Tribune: Pruitt Signals Welcome Support for Great Lakes Restoration Project. “**Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Scott Pruitt’s visit to Minnesota last week yielded an unexpected boon for those who care about clean water. In an interview with a Star Tribune reporter, Pruitt affirmed his support for federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which provides landmark protections for Lakes Huron, Erie, Michigan, Ontario and, most treasured by Minnesotans, Superior.**” (07/21/17)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune: Pruitt is working hard to protect the Great Lakes. “**Scott Pruitt, the nation’s top environmental officer, said Wednesday he endorses continued federal funding for a landmark cleanup of the Great Lakes. . ‘It’s a continuing need, and we have to see that it’s adequately funded.’**” (07/20/17)



Twin Cities WCCO-TV: Pruitt gave an in-depth interview about the EPA’s Back-To-Basics Agenda. “**EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was in studio for an exclusive interview while he was in the state to meet with Gov. Mark Dayton. He’s in Minnesota as part of his Back-To-Basics tour and talked about rolling back regulations.**” (07/19/17)

Deseret News: Pruitt visited Utah and talked about WOTUS. “**EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Utah as part of multistate tour to get input on how the agency can be more responsive to states’ needs in general and in specific how the controversial Waters of the**

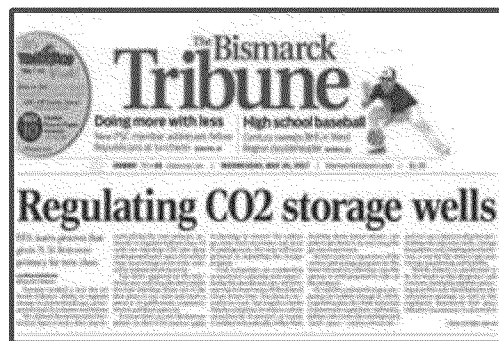
United States rule should be retooled.” (07/18/17)

Salt Lake City KTVX-TV: Pruitt discusses his Back-To-Basics agenda. “**EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt made his first stop on the State Action Tour here in Utah. This morning he sat down with Glen Mills on Good Morning Utah exclusively to talk about the tour.**” (07/18/17)

Tulsa World: EPA Chief Scott Pruitt says he’s ‘determined to prioritize Superfund cleanups.’ “**‘It’s important that we address state and tribal rights when protecting the environment and natural resources,’ Pruitt said upon announcement of a new grant awarded the Quapaw Tribe.**” (05/31/17)

Tulsa World: EPA’s Pruitt: Agency is ‘doing what it’s supposed to do’ at Osage pollution site. “**“This is just leadership,” Pruitt said. “It’s our agency doing what it’s supposed to do, coming in, finding out what the source of the problem is, getting it corrected.”** (05/28/17)

Minot Daily News: Governor Burgum says Pruitt is good for North Dakota. “**Burgum said he feels Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will have the biggest single impact on North Dakota. Pruitt, an attorney, is a Republican politician from Oklahoma. He has been a leading advocate against the EPA’s activist agenda, including suing the EPA to block its Clean Power Plan and Waters of the United States rule.**” (05/01/17)



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Air

Senator Tom Cotton, (R-Ark.): **"It's decisions like this one that are slowly but surely rebuilding trust between rural America and the EPA. I'm glad to see the EPA focus on concrete problems, like haze and other forms of pollution, and also show respect for our state officials' authority. It's a much-needed corrective to the heavy-handed ways of the previous administration, and I look forward to our state developing its own implementation plan, working in cooperation with—not under the thumb of—the EPA."** (01/29/18)

Becky Keogh, director, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality: "Today we are pleased to accept an EPA grant to drive further innovative, cost-effective solutions and **continuous improvement in Arkansas's air**, which is critical for healthy communities and economic progress. Through cooperative **efforts, Arkansas's state of air quality is one of the best in the nation—achieving all national air quality standards. Our progress is most effectively achieved through actions and support from local, state, and federal partners."** (01/29/18)

Todd Sax, head, California Air Resources Board Enforcement Division: "California Air Resources Board rules are designed to protect public health by ensuring all Californians breathe clean air. We appreciate our partners at U.S. EPA who are helping to achieve federal air quality standards throughout the State." (11/29/17)

Denise Koch, director, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Air Quality: **"We are encouraged by the Borough's efforts to work with the community to reduce emissions and appreciate EPA's approval of the**

moderate area plan. This will enable us to focus our efforts on developing the serious area plan and improving air quality in the area. The improved local ordinance, long running changeout program to provide funding to upgrade wood stoves and hydronic heaters to cleaner heating appliances, and the annual Fairbanks Clear the Air Forum and Expo are providing the local community with the information and tools needed to solve the **air quality problem locally."** (08/29/17)

Bryan Shaw, Ph.D., chairman, Texas Commission of Environmental Quality: "We are pleased with the improvement in air quality, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will continue to monitor during on-going remediation activities to make sure compliance with federal standards **continues."** (06/29/17)

Chemicals and Pesticides

Angela Logomasini, Ph.D., senior fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute: **"Pruitt's action [to deny chlorpyrifos ban] sets an important pro-science approach to regulation that the agency should continue to follow."** (08/10/17)

Cal Dooley, president and chief executive officer, American Chemistry Council: **"We commend Administrator Pruitt for his attention to improving the efficiency of new chemical review under an amended TSCA. U.S. businesses, jobs, and competitiveness depend on a functioning new chemicals program. In just the last month, significant progress has been made to relieve the backlog, and we welcome the Administrator's commitment to have the program functioning smoothly again by the end of July."** (06/05/17)

Mike Witt, corporate director of health and environmental research, Dow Chemical: **"Administrator Pruitt and his team at the EPA have made great progress over a very short**

period of time to accelerate new chemical reviews, providing American manufacturers with new and safe materials that will help drive innovation and manufacturing growth.” (06/05/17)

The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association: “**EPA’s denial of** [the petition to ban chlorpyrifos] is based off of the foundation in which EPA was created on, relying on sound-science and a transparent process. EPA will now direct its efforts to updating and revising its human health assessment for chlorpyrifos under the standard procedures of the ongoing registration review process, scheduled for completion on October 1, 2022. This is great news for producers and shows the **EPA’s redirection towards supporting a scientific process!**” (03/30/17)

Clean Power Plan

Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: “**The Trump administration is listening** to the people of Wyoming. **Today’s** announcement that the EPA will hold a listening session in Gillette, on the impacts of the so-called ‘**Clean Power Plan**,’ **demonstrates the administration’s commitment to hear** directly from the people who would have been hurt most by this punishing regulation. The Clean Power Plan would have meant lost jobs for energy workers in Gillette and across Wyoming. I am thankful to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for his leadership on this important **issue.**” (12/06/17)

Paul Bailey, president and chief executive officer, The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity: “**The Clean Power Plan is the poster child for bad regulation.** It is illegal, expensive, and ineffective, and we commend Administrator Pruitt for repealing it.” (10/10/17)

Congressman Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.), chairman, Congressional Western Caucus: “**The so-called** ‘Clean Power Plan..picked winners and losers at the expense of American job creators. I applaud Administrator and the Trump Administration for acting to rollback the unconstitutional and fundamentally-flawed Obama mandate.” (10/10/17)

Jay Timmons, president and chief executive officer, National Association of Manufacturers: “**Manufacturing workers can feel a tremendous sense of relief today.** The Trump administration has made the right decision and ended a **policy that threatened manufacturers’ access to affordable, reliable energy and did not even adhere to existing law.**” (10/10/17)

Chrissy Harbin, vice president of external affairs, **Americans for Prosperity**: “This is a welcome departure from the Washington-first, Americans-last approach that characterized energy and environmental policy under the previous administration. The Clean Power Plan (CPP) **was an overreach of executive power...** It’s great to see President Trump and EPA Administrator Pruitt rein in this sweeping mandate.” (10/09/17)

Hal Quinn, president and chief executive officer, National Mining Association: “**Administrator Pruitt will signal a decisive break** with past policies that have used regulation of doubtful legality to circumvent the will of **Congress, usurp States’ authority and raise** costs on American consumers. Repealing this Obama-era rule would close a chapter of regulatory overreach that set standards without regard to the steep costs or availability of technology necessary to meet them. The Clean Power Plan represented an unlawful **attempt to transform the nation’s power grid.**” (10/06/17)

Jim Matheson, chief executive officer, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association: "Affordable and reliable power is fundamental to a successful economy. We appreciate the Trump administration working to protect American families and businesses from the potentially devastating impacts of the Clean Power Plan." (03/28/17)

Cooperative Federalism

Amanda Bowen, executive director, Manufacturers Association of Florida: "The Manufacturers Association of Florida commends EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's laser focus on ensuring the protection and conservation of Florida's unique natural resources and ecosystems, while also maintaining sustainable and economically productive communities." (02/05/18)

John L. Hoblick, president, Florida Farm Bureau: "I applaud Administrator Pruitt's visit to Florida and his willingness to listen to the concerns of our growers. These concerns often stem from an oppressive regulatory environment, and the EPA has taken encouraging steps to curb federal overreach, such as rescinding the 2015 'Waters of the Unites States' rule." (02/05/18)

Brian Kraft, owner, Alaska Sportsman's Lodge: "This is an encouraging step for many Alaskan businesses and families that depend on Bristol Bay salmon. The EPA made the right decision by listening to local people, dozens of Alaskan business owners, and sportsmen and women around the country." (01/26/18)

Chris Blankenship, commissioner, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: "The State of Alabama welcomes EPA as the new Chairperson of the RESTORE Council. Alabama strongly supports the collaborative nature of the RESTORE Council between the five Gulf States and our federal

partners which is so foundational to restoration of the Alabama coast resulting from the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, as well as the cumulative effects of hurricanes on the sustainability of our important coastal resources and the people that rely on them." (12/06/17)

Mark Haney, president, Kentucky Farm Bureau: "We appreciate the EPA Administrator visiting our annual meeting to listen to farmers about their conservation efforts and concerns related to their operations. Administrator Pruitt, a fellow Kentuckian, knows the hard work our farmers put in on a daily basis to keep our farms financially and environmentally sustainable." (11/30/17)

Governor Phil Bryant, (R-Miss.): "Mississippi farmers are the original conservationists. I am grateful for Administrator Pruitt's commitment to working with us to develop strategies that will strengthen agriculture in Mississippi while protecting our environment." (10/12/17)

Evaristo Cruz, chairman, National Tribal Caucus: "The 1984 EPA Indian Policy is a critical instrument that provides both the EPA and Native American tribes with principles that illustrate the federal trust relationship. On behalf of the National Tribal Caucus we would like to thank Administrator Pruitt for upholding and honoring this legacy that EPA has instituted." (10/11/17)

Disaster Relief

Julia M. Nazario Fuentes, Mayor of Loíza: "This work in conjunction with the EPA is a great example of how our administration is building partnerships with federal, state and nonprofit organizations. It is important that our citizens follow the instructions provided by the EPA and our Recycling Office, so that we can keep Loíza clean. Our thanks to the EPA staff for the

speed with which we have worked on this project.” (01/12/18)

Governor Greg Abbott, (R-Texas): “Both the EPA and the state are working closely and collaboratively [to monitor the Texas sites and make sure the public health is not imperiled].” (09/05/17)

Bob Dinneen, president and chief executive officer, **Renewable Fuels Association**: “The RFA applauds the EPA’s decision to waive certain fuel regulations for 12 states and D.C. due to the fuel supply emergency caused by Hurricane Harvey. We believe the waiver has the potential to provide much-needed relief to consumers in these areas facing gasoline supply shortages and **price spikes**.” (08/10/17)

Forestry

Bob Cleaves, president and chief executive officer, Biomass Power Association: “**The** biomass industry greatly appreciates **Administrator Pruitt’s strong commitment** to create regulatory certainty for biomass power producers and all contributors to the wood supply chain.” (02/14/18)

Jason Stock, executive director, New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association: “**The New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association** is pleased Administrator Pruitt took the time to come to New Hampshire to meet with timberland owners, and members of the forest products industry. As the second most **forested state in the nation**, New Hampshire’s forests are an important part of our heritage, culture, and economy. Having a regulatory environment that promotes the growing, management and processing of timber will **ensure this legacy continues**.” (02/14/18)

Fuel Economy Standards

Mitch Bainwol, president and chief executive officer, The Auto Alliance: “**With this**

announcement, the Administration is fulfilling its commitment to reinstate the midterm evaluation of future vehicle fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards. This review is important to consumers nationwide who want government to rely on the facts to drive **improvements in fuel economy**. We’re delighted to see the two federal agencies align and coordinate their programs, and we thank Secretary Chao and Administrator Pruitt for working closely together to harmonize a review driven by the most current data, consumer preferences and marketplace realities. (8/10/17)

Peter Welch, president and chief executive officer, National Automobile Dealers Association: “NADA applauds the Trump Administration for reaffirming our shared commitment to a transparent, fair and data-driven midterm review of fuel-economy standards.” (03/15/17)

International Cooperation

Gian Luca Galletti, Italian Minister of the Environment: “The protection of the environment and public health is a common goal for Italy and the United States. There are many themes that see our common commitment. The presence of Administrator Pruitt at the G7 Environment in Bologna has been a very important element that allowed us to start constructive dialogue on all environmental issues as well as to open new channels of business cooperation between our two countries.” (06/11/17)

Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan, Canada: “I was grateful for the chance to meet with Administrator Pruitt. Canada and the U.S. can work together on a continental approach to energy and the environment that focuses on technological innovation like CCS and clean coal initiatives without tax and regulatory policies that cost jobs.” (04/04/17)

Regulatory Reform

Barry Hart, executive vice president and chief executive officer, Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives: “We are encouraged to see that the Trump Administration understands the concerns of people in rural America and is committed to bringing the change they want. We look forward to working with Administrator Pruitt and other administration officials as they **work to ensure Washington regulations don’t harm the people who can least afford it — our members — and help rural communities create jobs.**” (04/20/17)

Mike Jackson, chief executive officer, Auto Nation: The Trump Administration is “**absolutely doing the right thing**” when it comes to rolling back environmental regulations from the Obama Administration. (02/16/17)

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), U.S. Senate Majority Leader: “**I applaud Administrator Scott Pruitt for his decision to delay this Obama Administration issued regulation. [The 2015 Ozone Standards were] yet another attack on the Middle Class by the Obama Administration and was forced through despite significant concern from communities across the country. Today’s postponement will give states and municipalities relief in the interim while EPA continues to review NAAQS levels.**” (06/06/17)

Scientific Advisory Board Reforms

Howard Feldman, senior director for regulatory and scientific affairs, American Petroleum Institute: “**Smart**, science-based regulations are essential to our nation meeting its energy and environmental needs well into the future. **Administrator Pruitt’s actions today advance the administration’s commitment to promoting American energy production, transportation, refining, and use while protecting the environment.**” (10/31/17)

Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), senior member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: “**Administrator Pruitt’s directive to increase transparency and impartiality at the EPA is welcome news...The reforms implemented today will restore integrity to the science advisory boards and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that diverse voices are heard from the scientific community and increasing participation from state, local and tribal governments.**” (10/31/17)

Congressman Lamar Smith (R- Tex.), chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Science, Space, and Technology Committee: “**Today’s** announcement shows that we have an administrator with common sense, commitment and courage. Administrator Pruitt is restoring the EPA advisory boards to their original purpose – to provide the administrator objective advice on science and technology policies.” (10/31/17)

Smart Sectors

Michael D. Bellaman, president and chief executive officer, Associated Builders and Contractors: “**The Smart Sectors Program shows it’s a new day at EPA—and that’s good news for the environment and the economy. The nation’s construction industry welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with regulators to ensure that environmental protection is streamlined and cost effective. That’s the way government can help industry be more productive, create more jobs and grow the economy.**” (10/03/17)

John McKnight, senior vice president of government relations, National Marine Manufacturers Association: “**We are thrilled to be part of the EPA’s launch of its Smart Sectors Program and are proud to represent an industry that’s always first in line when it comes**

to partnering with EPA to improve its processes and benefits.” (10/03/17)

Sue and Settle

Tom Donohue, president and chief executive officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce: “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce applauded

Administrator Pruitt’s announcement that he would end the so-called sue and settle scheme, which allowed special interest groups to sue EPA in an attempt to force it to take action on their pet issues.” (11/13/17)

American Farm Bureau Federation: “**In fulfilling his promise to end the practice of regulation through litigation that has harmed the American public, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued an Agency-wide directive designed to end ‘sue and settle’ practice with the Agency, providing an unprecedented level of public participation and transparency in EPA consent decrees and settlement agreements.”** (10/16/17)

Richard Guebert, Jr., president, Illinois Farm Bureau: “**We’re pleased to see the U.S. EPA move away from the previous administration’s closed-door dealings which directed agency policy and into a more transparent form of revisions and rule-making. We would like to thank EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for working to increase transparency in the regulatory process and helping ensure that all stakeholders have a voice when new environmental rules are developed.”** (10/16/17)

Steve Milloy, senior policy fellow, Energy and Environmental Legal Institute: “**By ending the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) ‘Sue and Settle’ practice as well as improving transparency in consent decrees and settlement agreements, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is following through on President Trump’s promise to ‘drain the swamp.’**” (10/16/17)

William Yeatman, senior fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute: “**We agree with Administrator Pruitt’s goal of ensuring that the agency—and not special interests—establish federal policymaking priorities.”** (10/16/17)

Superfund

Governor Brian Sandoval (R-Nev.): “**The State of Nevada has secured a path forward to restore and reclaim the full Anaconda mine site on a predictable and transparent timeline. It was an honor to host Administrator Scott Pruitt in Weed Heights for this special announcement. This is a landmark day for those who have worked to accomplish a path toward achieving our shared goal of cleaning up the mine site and I am grateful for the trust of the EPA to defer management of the process to Nevada and the incredible partnership with Atlantic Richfield Company.”** (02/09/18)

Dawn Chapman, co-founder, Just Moms St. Louis: “**We consider 70-plus percent removal of the waste [at the West Lake Landfill] a victory and step in the right direction. Our goals, along with relocating the residents, have always been getting the radioactive waste out of the Missouri River floodplain and away from the threat of the underground fire.”** (02/01/18)

Congresswoman Ann Wagner (R-Mo.): “**After years of broken promises and inaction by previous administrations, Administrator Pruitt and the EPA are proposing a viable, permanent solution for cleaning up the West Lake Landfill. I commend them for delivering on this promise to our community and prioritizing Missourians who have lived in fear and uncertainty for too long.”** (02/01/18)

Maritza Lopez, East Chicago resident: “**Administrator Pruitt recognized that the USS Lead Superfund site was important enough to serve as the first Superfund site that he visited.**

His continued attention is appreciated. This should be the standard at all sites where residents are exposed to hazardous contamination.” (05/31/17)

WOTUS

Michael Turner, president, Dallas Builders Association: “**The Dallas Builders Association** commends EPA Administrator Pruitt for holding this roundtable in Dallas to get direct feedback from home builders and developers who are affected by burdensome regulations that raise the cost of housing and harm small businesses. **The nation’s home builders support the administrator’s efforts to enact a revised** waters of the U.S. rule that will protect the environment without adding unnecessary regulatory burdens that will hurt housing and other industries in Texas that rely on a **predictable permitting process.**” (08/10/17)

Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee: “The federal government works for the people of Iowa and the rest of the United States. Administrator Pruitt is right to come to Iowa and hear firsthand how the WOTUS rule and other regulations affect the farmers on the ground who are good stewards of the land while feeding the world.” (08/08/17)

Leslie Rutledge, Attorney General, Ark.: “Administrator Pruitt’s decision last month to completely re-evaluate the WOTUS rule, minimizing the regulatory burden on countless landowners, demonstrates his commitment to building stronger relationships with state partners.” (07/20/17)

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Thur 9/14/2017 5:37:30 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by CTIA: TRUMP says 'we have to have a wall' and GOP leaders are 'very on board' -- REPUBLICANS positioning DACA conversations as a starting point -- EDWARD FELSETHAL named new editor of TIME

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by CTIA

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

Good Thursday afternoon from Capitol Hill, where the House just wrapped up a marathon voting session where the chatter was all about immigration and how the president practices politics.

HAPPENING THIS AFTERNOON - Join POLITICO Pro and **TREASURY SECRETARY STEVEN MNUCHIN** today at 4 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel for a conversation about Tax Reform and The Trump Administration. Admission is free and open to the public. **Details** <http://politi.co/2xBqLUH> ... **Highlights from the Pro Policy Summit so far** <http://politi.co/2y0NqpF>

SOMETHING TO ASK MNUCHIN ABOUT -- "Big Six remain divided over basic elements of tax reform," by Brian Faler: "The 'Big Six' are deeply divided over how to rewrite the tax code, including how to finance long-promised cuts in individual and corporate rates. Though House Republicans are promising to release a plan the week of Sept. 25, the top congressional and administration negotiators remain at loggerheads over a number of items, including plans to reduce a deduction for state and local taxes, as well as one for corporate interest expenses.

'Right now, the Senate and the House are pretty far apart,' said one Republican aide. 'There's serious frustration.'

"Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), himself a member of the Big Six, fired a warning shot Thursday, saying his panel will not be a 'rubber stamp' for whatever is proposed.

One major issue is whether to adopt a plan that would allow companies to immediately deduct the cost of their investments, sources say." <http://politi.co/2x2lm61>

HERE'S THE LATEST ON THE DACA DEAL...

-- DON'T EXPECT A QUICK PROCESS. Republicans are positioning **PRESIDENT**

DONALD TRUMP'S negotiation with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer as a starting point. **SPEAKER PAUL RYAN** said there was "no agreement" and that "the president understands he's going to have to work with the congressional majorities to get any kind of legislative solution." **SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL** issued a statement saying "we look forward to receiving the Trump administration's legislative proposal as we continue to work on these issues."

-- **THE REALITY:** Republicans will not be on the sidelines for this negotiation. This won't come to the floor this month, and might not come to the floor in the early part of next month. Republicans -- who have the majority in both chambers -- are in control of what legislation makes it to the floor.

-- **DEMOCRATS** on Capitol Hill are feeling as optimistic as we've seen this year. One senior Democratic lawmaker came off the floor, predicting that DACA was just the first of many things Trump and Democrats are going to be able to work together on.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP said "we have to have a wall. If the wall is going to be obstructed, when we need the funds at a little bit later date -- we'll be determining how much we need -- then we're not doing anything," when he landed at Fort Myers, Florida to survey the damage from Hurricane Irma. He said Republicans were on board and that "we'll only do it if we get extreme security ... Ultimately we have to have the wall. If we don't have the wall, we're doing nothing. ... If I don't get the wall, then we will become the obstructionists." *Video, where Trump also talks about taxes*
<http://bit.ly/2xAM0WL>

-- **He also encouraged** Florida Gov. Rick Scott to run for Senate.
<http://politi.co/2xBnYLt>

WHAT'S IN A WORD -- @kaitlancollins: "A White House spokesman says the Trump administration 'will not discuss amnesty.' 'What they will discuss is a responsible path forward.' ... That 'responsible path,' @LWalters45 says, could include 'legal citizenship over a period of time.' ... When asked for her definition of amnesty, she said: 'I'm not going to sit here and litigate what the definition of amnesty is.'"

FROM THE RANK AND FILE -- "Trump diehards divided over DACA deal," by Kyle Cheney and Ted Hesson: "President Donald Trump's apparent deal with Democrats to shield some undocumented immigrants from deportation -- without demanding funding for a border wall -- is dividing some of his most ardent conservative backers. ... But many conservatives on Capitol Hill made clear this week that there is, in fact, a window for the president to win buy-in from the right for a deal that would protect some undocumented immigrants -- those who arrived in the country as minors -- in exchange for stepped-up immigration enforcement measures. ...

"I think [a deal] is entirely possible if we try to get the political rhetoric out of it and actually look for real solutions,' Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, told reporters Wednesday. 'We're going to have to deal with it. So we

might as well put forth a conservative effort to deal with the immigration issue broadly."
<http://politi.co/2y8U7Xz>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture. Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

BREAKING -- CBS'S MOSHEH OINOUNOU (@mosheh): "Former CIA Deputy Director @MichaelJMorell resigns as Senior Fellow at Harvard Kennedy school over their hiring of Chelsea Manning" <http://bit.ly/2wbYkwp>

REMEMBER THE IRAN DEAL FIGHT? -- "U.S. Expected to Keep Iran Nuclear Deal in Place for Now," by WSJ's Felicia Schwartz and Laurence Norman: "President Donald Trump on Thursday is expected to extend sanctions relief to Iran, U.S. officials said, retaining for now the U.S. commitment to the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement, whose fate nonetheless remains uncertain. As part of the international deal, the U.S. agreed to waive a wide range of sanctions on Iran and must renew the waiver every 120 days. Thursday is the deadline for renewing that waiver. While Mr. Trump is expected to renew the waiver and extend U.S. sanctions relief, he also is nearing another deadline in October to certify to Congress that Iran is in compliance with the terms of the nuclear deal." <http://on.wsj.com/2xBEbA5>

WAR REPORT -- "U.S. Military: American ISIS Fighter Reportedly 'Surrenders'," by The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff and Spencer Ackerman: "Multiple spokespersons for the U.S. military have told The Daily Beast that they are aware of reports that an American fighting in Syria for the so-called Islamic State has been taken into custody. A source familiar with the situation told The Daily Beast that the American was captured by Kurdish forces. Both of the spokespeople indicated that the fighter 'surrendered.' In either case, the detention of an American fighting for ISIS on an active battlefield would set up a major decision for Donald Trump about the future of wartime captures.

"According to The Daily Beast's source, the U.S. citizen was initially taken into custody by the Syrian Democratic Forces, the mostly Kurdish local proxy that the American military is using to fight ISIS on the ground in Syria. That source said the Kurds then turned the captive over to American forces. It is not clear where the American is currently being held. Neither the U.S. military command overseeing the war against ISIS nor the Justice Department, which plays a substantial role in deciding what to do with U.S. citizen detainees, are disputing this reporting." <http://thebea.st/2xBJKOS>

FORMER REP. DAVID DREIER (R-CALIF.) has won Mexico's highest honor to foreign nationals, the Aztec Eagle, for his support and work on the U.S.-Mexican relationship.

BEYOND THE BELTWAY - "New York's buildings emit most of its greenhouse gases. The mayor has a plan to change that," by WaPo's Brady Dennis and Kayla

Epstein: "New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) [announced] plans Thursday to force thousands of aging buildings there to become more energy efficient, a first-of-its-kind initiative intended to make the Big Apple a national leader in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. The initiative would mandate that owners of existing buildings larger than 25,000 square feet invest in more efficient heating and cooling systems, insulation and hot-water heaters in the years ahead. If approved by the City Council, the requirements would apply to about 14,500 private and municipal buildings, which the mayor's office says collectively account for nearly a quarter of New York City's emissions. Most buildings would need to comply with new efficiency targets by 2030, or their owners would face penalties." <http://wapo.st/2y7y1od>

TRACKING TRUMP'S DONATIONS -- "Houston Humane Society gets letter, donation from Donald Trump," by the Houston Chronicle's Fernando Alfonso III: "The president and Melania Trump sent a letter and \$25,000 to the Houston Humane Society to help with ongoing rescue and housing efforts following Hurricane Harvey. 'Animals are truly non-partisan members of society, can use help from both sides of the aisle,' said Sherry Ferguson, executive director for the Houston Humane Society, according to a Facebook post Thursday morning. 'Our shelter is so grateful for the first family's decision to make animals a top priority as Houstonians work to rebuild our city from the devastation left behind by Harvey.'" <http://bit.ly/2xACQcP>

MORE ON THE SONIC ATTACK ON DIPLOMATS -- "Attacked in bed, safe a few feet away: Cuba mysty deepens," by the AP's Josh Lederman, Michael Weissenstein and Matt Lee: "The blaring, grinding noise jolted the American diplomat from his bed in a Havana hotel. He moved just a few feet, and there was silence. He climbed back into bed. Inexplicably, the agonizing sound hit him again. It was as if he'd walked through some invisible wall cutting straight through his room.

"Soon came the hearing loss, and the speech problems, symptoms both similar and altogether different from others among at least 21 U.S. victims in an astonishing international mystery still unfolding in Cuba. The top U.S. diplomat has called them 'health attacks.' New details learned by The Associated Press indicate at least some of the incidents were confined to specific rooms or even parts of rooms with laser-like specificity, baffling U.S. officials who say the facts and the physics don't add up. ... Suspicion initially focused on a sonic weapon, and on the Cubans. Yet the diagnosis of mild brain injury, considered unlikely to result from sound, has confounded the FBI, the State Department and U.S. intelligence agencies involved in the investigation." <http://bit.ly/2xAFaAr>

JOHN JUDIS in THE NEW REPUBLIC -- "Redoing the Electoral Math: I argued that demographics favored the Democrats. I was wrong": "On one level, there's no arguing with the math. If you take the percentage of Americans that the U.S. census defines as 'minorities' and project their past voting habits into the next decade and beyond, you'll come up with a very sunny version of the Democrats' prospects. There are only two problems with this line of thinking, but they're pretty big ones. For starters, the census prediction of a 'majority-minority' America -- slated to arrive in 2044 -- is deeply flawed.

And so is the notion that ethnic minorities will always and forever continue to back Democrats in Obama-like numbers." <http://bit.ly/2xBpr4h>

MEDIAWATCH -- EDWARD FELSENTHAL will be the new editor in chief of TIME, the magazine announced today. He was previously the digital director of Time Inc.'s News and Lifestyle groups and the digital editor at TIME. **Release** <http://ti.me/2xBr2a3>

-- **CHRIS WALLACE** resigned with Fox News until "well past the 2020 election," he said in a news release distributed by Fox News.

--**"The David Carr Generation:** More than a dozen mentees of the late journalist remember the lessons he imparted," by Mikaela Lefrak in The Atlantic: "Carr had an unusual gift for recognizing young talent, and an equally unusual willingness to pull that talent up the ladder with him. He hired us for internships and jobs, edited our stories, sent out emails on our behalf, invited us to meetings we were really too junior to be a part of, and introduced us to his most successful and famous friends. But most important of all was this: He told us again and again that we had something special. We were smart, he told us. We were worthy. And we believed him, because he was the best guy we knew." **Featuring Amy Chozick, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Jake Tapper, Brian Stelter, and many more** <http://theatl.in.tc/2xBe3W8>

-- **GLAMOUR'S** editor in chief Cindi Leive is quitting, the fourth major magazine editor in a week to do so. **NYT's Katherine Rosman with an interview** <http://nyti.ms/2xBXRE8>

BUSINESS BURST -- JPMORGAN CHASE & CO. announced a \$40 million investment over three years in Chicago's South and West Sides. They will partner with employers and training institutions to train residents, invest in neighborhood projects, help grow small businesses and help create financially healthy families, according to a press release. *More details* <http://bit.ly/2y8muoR>

TRANSITIONS -- Carol Danko has been hired by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to be their managing director of communications, a job she starts Monday. She most recently was VP of public affairs at SIFMA and is a Michael Grimm and Peter King alum. ... **Chris Chafin** has been hired as senior publicity manager for BBC Global News Limited, where he'll oversee media relations in the Americas for the BBC World Service, BBC World News, and BBC.com. He was previously senior communications manager at the Financial Times. ... **Jake Wilkins** has joined Secretary Perdue's communications office at the Department of Agriculture. Wilkins worked in the RNC's press shop and is an alum of multiple Senate offices (h/t Kevin Cirilli)

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - James Kotecki, principal at the Kotecki Group and a Politico alum, and **Emily Kotecki**, manager of interpretation at the North Carolina Museum of Art, recently welcomed Maya Ruth Kotecki. **Pic with her big brother Max** - James' caption: "This is the kind of picture that really makes fatherhood worth it." <http://politi.co/2wrDkNb>

BONUS BIRTHDAY: Errol Cockfield, SVP of MSNBC media relations. (h/t Tyree Rush)

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

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To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
From: Skolnik, Samuel
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:36:39 PM
Subject: Time-sensitive request from Bloomberg Government regarding Definers

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

sskolnik@bgov.com

@samskolnik

To: Kevin Bogardus[kbogardus@eenews.net]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 6:43:53 PM
Subject: RE: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

One additional statement regarding sole-sourcing.

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 10:19 AM
To: 'Kevin Bogardus' <kbogardus@eenews.net>; Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

From: Kevin Bogardus [<mailto:kbogardus@eenews.net>]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>; Ferguson, Lincoln <ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov>; Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>; Hewitt, James <hewitt.james@epa.gov>; Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov>; Daniell, Kelsi <daniell.kelsi@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers Corp. contract with EPA

Hey everyone,

It's Kevin Bogardus with E&E News.

I'm working on a piece about Definers Corp.'s contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/transparency/Pages/TransactionDetails.aspx?RecordID=53D2AF0E-B566-47BB-8EB4-728DAC00CEB7&AwardID=59978626&AwardType=C>). I had a few questions about this, which are:

-- How did this contract happen? Did Definers approach EPA first or did EPA approach Definers first?

-- What services will Definers be providing EPA? Will Definers be providing "war room" services to EPA (https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3d6ea3_c21da991906e440eba09e35b63bbcc10.pdf)?

-- A search of [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) shows that Definers' contract with EPA is Definers' first contract with EPA (<https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/AdvancedSearch.aspx?sub=y&ST=C&FY=2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011>). Is that accurate?

Please get back to me as soon as possible. My deadline is 12:30 pm EST today but the sooner you get back to me, the more it helps my reporting. Also, since I'm working from home today, please email me here or call my cell phone at 202-247-7844. Thank you for your help.

Kevin Bogardus

E&E News Reporter

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EnergyWire, ClimateWire, E&E Daily, Greenwire, E&ENews PM, E&ETV

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Wed 12/13/2017 11:41:45 AM
Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates: 'POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE' in Alabama -- WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW about how this affects Washington -- ABBAS says Palestinians 'won't accept any role for U.S.' in Middle East peace process

[View online version](#) | Add politicoplaybook@politico.com to your address book.

Today's POLITICO Playbook presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

By ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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Driving the Day

HERE YOU GO, JARED -- BREAKING, at 4:17 a.m.: "ISTANBUL (AP) - Palestinian President Abbas says Palestinians won't accept any role for U.S. in Mideast peace process 'from now on.'" <http://bit.ly/2BI3IUY>

BANNER HEADLINE in the Montgomery Advertiser: "**SEN. JONES (D) ...** Alabama votes Democrat in for historic change" <http://bit.ly/2AhkEm1>

Good Wednesday morning. GABE DEBENEDETTI and ALEX ISENSTADT in Birmingham, Alabama: "A Democrat has been elected to the Senate from Alabama for the first time in a quarter-century, and the political earthquake has just begun." <http://politi.co/2Ajs4p5>

The White House is waking up to this reality: Palestinians say they won't deal with the U.S. in Middle East peace process. The president endorsed the losing candidate twice in the Alabama race: Luther Strange lost the primary, and Roy Moore lost the special election. And he now faces a razor-thin majority in a U.S. Senate where he's all but alienated a handful of the members of his own party. It looks like he'll get tax reform done. But 2018 is looking really difficult for the president.

WHAT DOUG JONES' VICTORY MEANS ...

-- **THE FLIMSY MAJORITY:** Governing in Washington has now become a coin flip. Republicans' 51-49 majority isn't much of a majority at all. This doesn't have much of an impact at the moment, because Luther Strange will remain in the Senate until the end of the year, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told reporters yesterday.

Tax reform is likely safe, as the Senate plans a Monday vote, and the House a Tuesday vote. But anything else the president wants to do legislatively is going to face stiff headwinds. Trump can lose only one vote on anything. And he's beat up on key Republicans like Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), so his margin for error is completely nonexistent. Any single Republican senator will have leverage to exact concessions from the leadership given the razor-thin majority. McConnell will have to guide the White House more than ever. **PROBABLY DEAD ON ARRIVAL:** Any sort of overhaul of entitlements. **A LOT HARDER:** Repealing Obamacare. **A BETTER BET?** Infrastructure.

-- **HOUSE REPUBLICANS FURTHER SQUEEZED.** Speaker Paul Ryan's majority is already perpetually frustrated by a Senate that can't -- or won't -- move its bills. Hey guys, it's only going to get worse for you now.

-- **TESTS ABOUND:** Can the president figure out how to navigate this new political reality? Will **CHUCK SCHUMER** be able to keep Doug Jones in the fold? He's been sneakily successful at keeping Democrats unified on legislative items like health care and tax reform. Now he has a senator who just might periodically find it in his interest to side with Republicans. **KEEP YOUR EYES ON IMMIGRATION.** A tighter majority could give Democrats more leverage -- if they are unified. Nancy Pelosi and Schumer have staked out a fix for DACA as "must-do." And now they'll have an extra Democratic vote in 2018.

-- **FRESH QUESTIONS ABOUT STEVE BANNON.** Get used to hearing this: candidates matter. That's what Mitch McConnell's world will be saying plenty over the next few days. Steven Law, the head of the McConnell backed Senate Leadership Fund, said: "This is a brutal reminder that candidate quality matters regardless of where you are running. Not only did Steve Bannon cost us a critical Senate seat in one of the most Republican states in the country, but he also dragged the president of the United States into his fiasco."

REMEMBER: Bannon world was trying to tell reporters that if he had campaigned for Ed Gillespie in Virginia, he could've won. Gillespie lost by nine points. Bannon was essentially all in for Moore -- he campaigned for him late in the race -- and Jones nearly cracked the 50 percent mark.

-- **THE MIDTERMS: DEMOCRATS** were already energized after the Virginia and New Jersey elections. Watch for the party to seize on this victory to pull in a pile of campaign cash for the midterm elections and re-up with top tier candidate recruits.

REPUBLICANS are increasingly nervous about their prospects next year with President Trump as the leader of their party, and with little to show voters. House Republicans have been telling us for weeks that they feel a potential wave as they stare 2018 in the eye.

QUOTE OF THE DAY, from Josh Holmes in Mike DeBonis's story in the Post: "If I had the top five Republican minds in politics and we spent three months attempting to

conceive of a way to lose an Alabama Senate race, I'm not sure that we could come up with it. You could literally take any name out of a phone book except Roy Moore's and win by double digits. And we managed to get the only guy in Alabama that could lose to a Democrat." <http://wapo.st/2z7DH4b>

NYT'S JONATHAN MARTIN and **ALEX BURNS** note a "suburban shellacking" in Alabama. "In Jefferson County, which includes Birmingham and some of the state's wealthiest enclaves, Mr. Jones, the Democratic candidate, captured more than 68 percent of the vote. And in Madison County, home to Huntsville and a large NASA facility, Mr. Jones won 57 percent of the vote." <http://nyti.ms/2z80tsC>

WAPO'S BOB COSTA: "Democrats are jubilant - and newly confident about 2018 - as Alabama delivers win on Trump's turf" <http://wapo.st/2z6CcU3>

A RECOUNT might not be allowed, per Rick Hasen. <http://bit.ly/2nYBynM>

THE COLLECTIVE 'PHEW' MOMENT: Senate Republicans were scheduled to meet today to discuss whether they would allow Roy Moore in the conference. They don't have to do that anymore.

-- WHAT TO LEARN FROM THIS: "5 takeaways from Alabama's startling special election," by Gabe Debendetti and Alex Isenstadt: "Here are POLITICO's five takeaways after Alabama's wild, ugly, controversial, and historically unparalleled Senate race: **Bannon's bruising.** Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon went all-in for Moore - and then some. ... **What black voter problem?** All the chatter across Alabama for the final week of the race focused on Democrats' alleged problems turning out black voters. But after a blockbuster turnout operation designed by Jones' campaign and national Democrats, African-American voters turned out in massive numbers for the former U.S. attorney. ... **Trump loses capital.** The president put his political capital on the line - and lost. ...

"Revenge of the soccer mom. The other primary reason for Jones' win was strong antipathy toward Moore among white, suburban, college-educated conservatives. ... **Democrats to Trump: Watch out.** ... Alabama's historic turnout on Tuesday mirrored enormous numbers for Democratic voters in both Virginia's and New Jersey's gubernatorial races even after muddy campaigns in all three states - and party operatives are now lunging to capitalize on that energy ahead of the 2018 midterms." <http://politi.co/2BZUxkj>

-- BEHIND THE NUMBERS: "Exit polls: How Doug Jones pulled off his stunning win," by Steven Shepard: "Doug Jones needed a surge of black voter turnout and a wide gender gap to pull off his stunning victory over embattled Republican Roy Moore in Tuesday's special Senate election. In becoming the first Democrat to win a statewide federal election in Alabama since 1992, Jones proved that Democratic fears of low turnout among African-American voters - a reliable Democratic constituency in the racially polarized state -- were unfounded.

"According to exit polls conducted by the National Election Pool, blacks made up about 29 percent of the electorate on Tuesday and voted for Jones almost unanimously, 96 percent to 4 percent - results that match turnout patterns showing greater than expected vote counts in many of the Black Belt counties and the state's urban centers. Jones also made some inroads among white voters - particularly women and those with college degrees. While Moore still won white voters by a more-than-2-to-1 margin, 68 percent to 30 percent, that is closer than other recent elections in which Republicans won nearly 4 out of 5 white voters." <http://politi.co/2z6yA4l>

-- THE PRESIDENT'S MISCALCULATION: "Trump suffers 'big black eye' in Alabama," by Eliana Johnson: "Doug Jones didn't just defeat Roy Moore in Alabama's Senate race on Tuesday night - he administered the most crushing and embarrassing political blow of President Donald Trump's young presidency. Jones' win meant that Trump, who had endorsed Luther Strange in the Republican primary before backing Moore in the general election, threw his weight behind the losing candidate not once, but twice, in the Alabama race.

"It was an extraordinary outcome in a state that Trump carried by 28 points in last year's presidential election. Jones' victory, the first by a Democrat in Alabama in 25 years, exposed the limits of the president's power in a party that is now frequently referred to as 'the party of Trump.' Indeed, though rank-and-file Republicans have resisted, fought, and feared Trump's influence over GOP voters, Tuesday's election results suggested that, whatever the president's power, he is incapable of boosting other anti-establishment candidates to office." <http://politi.co/2BZeO9p>

-- @realDonaldTrump at 11:08 p.m.: "Congratulations to Doug Jones on a hard fought victory. The write-in votes played a very big factor, but a win is a win. The people of Alabama are great, and the Republicans will have another shot at this seat in a very short period of time. It never ends!"

******* A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** UAE airlines bought \$42 billion in US-made commercial aircraft at the 2017 Dubai Airshow. That's economic growth and jobs for Americans. The UAE-US commercial aviation relationship is a win-win deal. <http://politi.co/2AtLDMj> *****

KNOWING DOUG JONES -- "Doug Jones: A Lawyer in the Thick of Alabama's Big Moments," by NYT's Alex Burns and Campbell Robertson: "Before the special election on Tuesday, the largest of Mr. Jones's historical moments, and perhaps still the most consequential, were the successful prosecutions of two of the Klansmen involved in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, nearly 40 years after the crime. Mr. Jones served as lead prosecutor. Though he continued to be involved in some of Alabama's highest-profile legal cases in private practice, the church bombing prosecutions were his last work for the federal government until he starts his new job in Washington.

"Over the years, Mr. Jones, now 63, has remained a rare combination: part bourbon-sipping Southerner and part New York Yankees-loving Democrat. He has often called in to discuss legal matters with Paul Finebaum, whose radio talk show is akin to a religious service for college football fans in the Southeast, and he has been a longtime friend of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., whose 1988 presidential campaign he worked on. Mr. Biden returned the favor with a rally appearance in October."

<http://nyti.ms/2Cd7Oab>

HAPPENING TODAY -- HOUSE REPUBLICAN RUMBLE -- House Republicans meet at 3 p.m. to discuss the end of year. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has a messy situation on his hands. Government funding expires in nine days. The leadership faces resistance from appropriators, who don't like the short-term funding of government, especially after they spent months passing the 12 spending bills; conservatives don't like the uptick in spending; and Texans are angry because the billions they want in disaster spending might be pared back in size, and pushed back to January.

-- **THE CONCERN:** The leadership has been talking about passing a full year of defense funding, paired with a short-term funding measure that funds government through sometime in January -- a move aimed at forcing the Senate to swallow it. It's not a sustainable position, because McConnell does not think he can pass this. So Republicans could be forced to pass a short-term spending measure, and revisit the fight in January. **BUT** Democrats will have much more leverage next year once Jones is sworn in.

-- **CONSIDER THIS:** Republicans might have to swallow an immigration deal they don't like. Congress might boost spending to new levels. They might bolster Obamacare. And they're funding government on a two-week basis. **TRUTH BOMB:** They did better with President Barack Obama in the White House!

NOT A GOOD LOOK -- "In texts, FBI agents on Russia probe called Trump an 'idiot'," by Josh Gerstein: "Two FBI agents assigned to the investigation into alleged collusion between President Donald Trump's campaign and Russia exchanged text messages referring to the future president as an 'idiot,' according to copies of messages turned over to Congress Tuesday night by the Justice Department. Special Counsel Robert Mueller removed one of the agents, Peter Strzok, from the Russia probe 'immediately' after learning of the texts in late July, the department said in a letter to lawmakers. The other agent, Lisa Page, had already ended her assignment to Mueller's office. Copies of the messages obtained by POLITICO show the pair reacting to various developments as the presidential race unfolded and that their reaction to Trump was negative from early on." <http://politi.co/2AC0qrm>

WHERE THINGS STAND -- "White House lawyer: Mueller finished with interviews he's requested," by Darren Samuelsohn: "Special counsel Robert Mueller on Tuesday completed interviews with the last in a slate of about two dozen current and former White House witnesses he's initially requested as part of the investigation into Russia's actions in the presidential election, White House attorney Ty Cobb said. It's unclear if

Mueller will seek follow-up interviews or seek to question additional people beyond the initial batch of witnesses, but the completion of this round of questioning tracks with the goal Cobb has long stated publicly that President Donald Trump's White House was cooperating with the Russia investigators in search of a speedy resolution to the probe.

...

"Cobb had previously said he expected the interviews to wrap up by Thanksgiving but, as the holiday approached, he backed away from that timeline. Cobb has also said he was looking for Mueller to issue a statement by the end of the year exonerating the president. Mueller's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Cobb's characterization of the special counsel probe." <http://politi.co/2BiXwHE>

ON TAXES ...

-- **"GOP tax plan could bring big New Year's surprises,"** by Brian Faler: "American taxpayers may get a jolt on New Year's Day when new tax rules -- including some sudden tax increases -- take effect just days after Republicans hope to pass their overhaul and have it signed into law. In an effort to juice the economy with tax cuts ahead of the midterm elections, the GOP is planning a Jan. 1 start date for its sweeping rewrite of the code. But along with Republicans' much-advertised cuts in business and individual taxes, there would be tax increases as well, some of which have been barely debated.

"Some people who sell their homes may find they owe thousands more in taxes; investors could pay more when they sell stocks; and undocumented immigrants could find themselves cut off from a popular child tax credit Republicans plan to expand. Fringe benefits for workers such as subway passes and help with moving expenses will likely no longer be deductible, which might prompt companies to drop them.

"Payroll administrators worry they won't be able to make changes to tax withholding by the first of the year, and both large and small businesses may face altogether new tax rules that many scarcely understand. Those overnight changes would leave the public little time to adjust, critics say, and highlight a downside to Republicans' rapid-fire approach to rewriting the code." <http://politi.co/2nTn74o>

-- **"GOP negotiators move closer to reducing top tax rate for high-income households but face blowback,"** by WaPo's Erica Werner and Damian Paletta: "Senior Republican negotiators were moving closer to a deal Tuesday to reduce the top tax rate for high-income households from 39.6 percent to 37 percent, blowing by political concerns about aiding the rich in order to ease passage of a \$1.5 trillion tax package. The move, which needs to gain the support of a broad swath of Republicans in the House and Senate, would lower taxes for top earners throughout the country, potentially addressing the concerns of two GOP constituencies about separate tax legislation passed by the House and Senate.

"Wealthy individuals in New York, California and other high-tax states had

complained that their taxes might go up under the plan, which curtails the ability of taxpayers to deduct state and local taxes. And conservative House Republicans had said it did not go far enough to bring down top rates - long a principle of Republican economic orthodoxy." <http://wapo.st/2CaPSwE>

SO, at the end of the day, Republicans are cutting the top marginal tax rate.

PRESIDENT TRUMP is having lunch with tax conferees from both parties. He will deliver his "closing argument" on tax reform in the grand foyer at the White House at 3 p.m. Trump will be joined by five middle income families and talk about how the tax bill will help each one individually, according to a senior administration official. He'll also be flanked by more than 100 people -- many of them young -- to try and press the point that the tax bill will have a lasting impact for the next generation.

BEN WHITE talks taxes with **DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN** in the latest POLITICO Money podcast: "The Republican tax plan is not going to pay for itself, and the Trump administration should stop pretending it will. That's the message from Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former director of the Congressional Budget Office and senior adviser to President George W. Bush and the presidential campaign of Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.).

"I don't think these things pay for themselves. They never have, ' said Holtz-Eakin, president of the conservative think tank American Action Forum, in the latest edition of the POLITICO Money podcast. 'But the growth is really important.'"

<http://politi.co/2iZQhty> ... **Listen to the full podcast** <http://apple.co/2nUA2Dc>

THE JUICE ...

-- VP MIKE PENCE'S HOLIDAY PARTY - Pool report: "Pence entertained about 60 RNC members and spouses at his residence [last night]. Each member received a photo with him upon entering. Drinks included a so-so white wine and a seasonally appropriate mulled (virgin) cider. Food included a delightful baked salmon. ... Guests were entertained by Marine Corps piano, a string orchestra from the Air Force, and a Northern Irish Christian band." **Pic** <http://politi.co/2AU5gxd>

SPOTTED: RNC chairman Ronna McDaniel, who Pence referred to as "Ronna Romney McDaniel," Rep. Amata Radewagen (R-American Samoa), former Puerto Rico Gov. Luis Fortuño, and Henry Barbour, the powerful Mississippi committeeman and nephew of the ex-governor.

-- COMMERCE SECRETARY WILBUR ROSS and his wife Hilary Geary Ross hosted their holiday party last night where "guests drank Champagne and feasted on shrimp, smoked salmon, regional cheeses and pigs in the blanket while admiring their hosts' extraordinary collection of art works by surrealist painter Rene Magritte", according to an attendee. **SPOTTED:** Attorney General and Mrs. Jeff Sessions, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin

and Louise Linton, Labor Secretary Alex Acosta, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Kellyanne Conway, Jane Stanton Hitchcock, Patty Hearst Shaw, Chris and Lorraine Wallace ...

... **David Rubenstein**, Rima Al-Sabah, Ashley Gunn, Ken Duberstein, Alexandra de Borchgrave, the ambassadors from Kuwait, Italy, Spain, Italy, Germany and Egypt, U.S. Amb. to France Jamie McCourt, U.S. Amb. to Spain Duke Buchan, Bill Nitze, Joan Fleischmann Tobin, Kevin Chaffee, Francesca Craig, Anita McBride, Lee Folger, John and JoAnn Mason, Buffy Cafritz, Ginny Ryan, Stuart and Wilma Bernstein and Tom Quinn, Rusty Powell, C. Boyden Gray, Susan Markey, James Rockas, Wendy Teramoto, Tom Barrack and his girlfriend Cio Soler, Reed and Maggie Cordish.

Playbook Reads

PHOTO DU JOUR: Senator-elect Doug Jones and his wife Louise wave to his supporters at a watch party in Birmingham, Ala. on Dec. 12. Jones defeated Republican Roy Moore in a close special election. | John Bazemore/AP Photo

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- STEVEN SHEPARD: "Half of voters say sexual misconduct accusations against Trump are credible": "Fifty percent of registered voters think the allegations against Trump are credible, more than the 29 percent who think they are not credible. The remaining 21 percent of voters don't know if the allegations are credible." <http://politi.co/2z7L1wH>

SARAH KLEINER in Politico Magazine: **"Veterans Charity Raises Millions to Help Those Who've Served. But Telemarketers Are Pocketing Most of It":**
<http://politi.co/2iZsRoc>

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** Boeing is the preferred supplier for UAE commercial aviation requirements. Over the past 10 years, UAE customers have ordered \$150 billion in Boeing planes, supporting 781,000 jobs in the US and injecting billions of dollars into the US economy. In 2016, the US had a \$19 billion trade surplus with the UAE, America's third largest trade surplus globally.
<http://politi.co/2AtLDMj> *****

HMM -- "Trump's Stand-In Bureaucrats May Have Overstayed Limits," by Bloomberg's Josh Eidelson: "President Donald Trump's slow pace of hiring for key government jobs has left stand-ins occupying positions for so long that it may violate time limits on acting appointments, potentially resulting in decisions being overturned in court. Enforcement actions as well as policy decisions on a variety of topics, such as easing restrictions on methane emissions from oil wells or permitting schools to offer 1 percent milk, could be challenged on the grounds that they were enacted by officials

who had been in acting roles too long or were improperly delegated authority."

<https://bloom.bg/2ylq6ma>

-- **"Millions of People Post Comments on Federal Regulations. Many Are Fake,"** by WSJ's James V. Grimaldi and Paul Overberg: "A comment posted on the Federal Communications Commission's public docket endorses a Trump-administration plan to repeal a 'net neutrality' policy requiring internet providers to treat all web traffic the same. Calling the old Obama-era policy an 'exploitation of the open Internet,' the comment was posted on June 2 by Donna Duthie of Lake Bluff, Ill. It's a fake. Ms. Duthie died 12 years ago. The Wall Street Journal has uncovered thousands of other fraudulent comments on regulatory dockets at federal agencies, some using what appear to be stolen identities posted by computers programmed to pile comments onto the dockets." <http://on.wsj.com/2z6sKjq>

VALLEY TALK -- GOOGLE'S TOP SEARCHES in the U.S. this year: Hurricane Irma, Matt Lauer, Tom Petty, Super Bowl, Las Vegas Shooting, Mayweather vs McGregor Fight, Solar Eclipse, Hurricane Harvey, Aaron Hernandez, Fidget Spinner. ***Their 2-min. "2017 Year in Search" video*** <http://bit.ly/2Bhbiug>

MEDIAWATCH -- NEW NYT MAGAZINE COVER - Sunday's magazine is a special "She Said" edition that is dedicated to sexual harassment: "Amanda Hess, Anita Hill, Laura Kipnis, Soledad O'Brien, Lynn Povich, Danyel Smith and Emily Bazelon discuss how the rules of the workplace should be revised - and other questions of sex, power, ambitious and fairness." <http://nyti.ms/2CcQ3HU> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2AygF8Z>

Playbookers

SPOTTED late last night at Le Diplomate: Jonathan Capehart, Nick Schmit, and Obama alums Sam Tubman, Joe Paulsen and former U.S. Amb. to Singapore Kirk Wagar. When Jones' victory was called, there were cheers at the bar. ... David Gergen and Arthur Brooks having lunch at Darlington House in Dupont yesterday

SPOTTED celebrating the career of retiring Fox lobbyist Kathy Ramsey at the Phoenix Park Hotel: CIA Director Mike Pompeo and wife Susan, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) and wife Mylene, Rep. Billy Long (R-Mo.) and wife Barbara, Rep. Susan Brooks (R-Ind.), Chip Smith, Richard Bates, John Orlando, Bryce Harlow, Eddie Fritts.

OUT AND ABOUT -- Newsmax Media held its Christmas party last night in New York at the 48th Lounge on Avenue of the Americas. **SPOTTED:** Randy Levine, Michael Clemente, former Sen. Al D'Amato (R-N.Y.), Steve Forbes, Tom DiNapoli, Maggie Haberman, Sam Nunberg, Bo Dietl, Rick Ungar, Randi Weingarten, Bill White Pat Caddell, Betsy McCaughey, Richard Johnson, Judith Miller, Bernard and Hala Kerik, Kimberly Reed, Monica Crowley, Lloyd Grove, Joe Conason, Deroy Murdock, Scott Rasmussen, Andrew Stein, Deroy Murdock and Rita Cosby.

SPOTTED at the RIAA and Spotify charity bash at the 9:30 Club celebrating Musicians On Call with Fifth Harmony: Reps. Ted Deutch (R-Fla.), Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), and Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.), Michele Ballantyne, Mitch Glazier, Tom Manatos, Emery Simon, Toby Knapp, Pete Griffin, Tyler Grimm, Lee Thomas Miller, Cara Duckworth, Jonathan Lamy, Sarah Gilmore, Sean McLean, Todd Flournoy, Chris Ortman, Austin Weatherford, Chris Cylke and Jonathan Adelstein.

SPOTTED at the Jefferson Hotel yesterday afternoon for a party for Tina Brown's new book "The Vanity Fair Diaries: 1983 - 1992" hosted by Connie Milstein, Tammy Haddad, Andrea Mitchell, Carol Melton, Gail MacKinnon, Rachel Pearson, Kathy O'Hearn, and Hilary Rosen (**\$16 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2C0rahB>): Chris and Lorraine Wallace, Jane Harman, Teresa Carlson, Kimberley Fritts, Ambassador Dina Kavar, Susan Sher, Heather Podesta, Kathleen Parker, Mack McLarty, Lloyd Hand, Tom Forrest, David Frum, Kristi Rogers, Becca Ginsberg, JoAnne Ginsberg, Jen Bloch, Kelley McCormick, David Chavern, Margaret Sullivan, Howard Fineman, Ryan Williams, Terri Fariello, Neera Tanden, Megan Smith, John Coale, Tori O'Neal, Alyse Nelson, Tom Quinn, Linda Douglass and former Amb. John Phillips, Kevin Baron, Robin Goldman, Jill Barclay, Janet Donovan, Craig Gordon, Jane Hitchcock and Jim Hoagland.

TRANSITIONS -- @rchammond: "25 new stamps in my passport from traveling with Sec. Tillerson, but I am most proud of the U.S Seal on the front. Today is my last day working alongside America's diplomats at the @StateDept. It has been a privilege to serve in the Trump Admin. and to be part of #MAGA ... After the New Year, and a few weeks off, I will return to @TheHeraldGroup to help our clients develop and execute winning communications and public affairs strategies. #MerryChristmas".

BIRTHDAYS OF THE DAY: former Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack**, now president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, is 67. **How he got his start in politics:** "The mayor of my town, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, was shot and killed in a City Council meeting and I was asked by his father to run for mayor. I worked on rebuilding infrastructure. The mayor's death was related to an unfixed sewer problem that caused sewage to back up in people's homes." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2yiFi3L>

--Trish Regan, host of "The Intelligence Report" with Trish Regan on Fox Business Network. **How she got her start in journalism:** "I got my start writing for the local town newspaper in Hampton, N.H., in the fifth grade. But, I never thought I'd be a journalist. Growing up, more than anything, I wanted to be an international opera star! Seriously. Fortunately, the journalism thing turned out to be a good fallback position." **Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2yiFi3L>

BIRTHDAYS: Todd S. Purdum ... Mo Elleithee, executive director of Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service at the McCourt School, Fox political contributor, Hillary campaign alum, former DNC spokesman, and loyal Hoya (hat tip: Ben Chang, his former Georgetown roommate) ... Michael D. Smith, exec. director of MBK Alliance and Youth Opportunities at the Obama Foundation and former special

assistant to President Obama (h/t Crystal Carson) ... Jeffrey Schneider, principal at The Lead PR ... Ben Bernanke is 64 ... former Secretary of State George Shultz is 97 ... Herman Cain is 72 ... Allan Blutstein, America Rising's FOIA Wizard, is 5-0 ... Brian Baenig is 42 ... Kelly Gleeson ... Amy Mitchell ... Stephenie Foster (hat tip: Jon Haber) ... Washington Institute's Stephanie Valdes ... Nancy Fitzpatrick ... Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) is 75 ... Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) is 55. He celebrated Sunday with a big party with supporters in Silver Spring (h/t Marina McCarthy) ... Rep. Donald Norcross (D-N.J.) is 59 ... Edelman's India Goodman ... Morgan Williams ...

... **Riva Sciuto**, manager of global comms and public affairs at Google ... Bharat Krishnan ... Rajeev Chopra ... NBC News' Haley Talbot, right-hand to Andrea Mitchell (h/t Olivia Petersen) ... Nick Payton ... Google's Conor Chrisom ... Peter Ogburn is 38 ... Atefeh Yazdi ... Karen Hicks ... Joe Rozek, executive director of homeland security and counterterrorism at Microsoft Licensing ... Martin Whitmer ... William Todd ... Ruth Wedgwood ... Viviana Hurtado ... Elizabeth Dial Pinkerton ... Leighann Lenti ... Bernard Duffi is 45 ... Jill Latham ... Vera Jordan ... Alec Zender ... George Fishman ... Randy Riddle ... Pat Peyton ... Alan Julson (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates:** UAE airlines have received or have on order more than 800 Boeing aircraft. Emirates is the world's largest operator of Boeing 777s and has 40 Boeing 787-10s currently on order. Flydubai operates an all-Boeing fleet of planes and has a total of 361 Boeing 737s on order. Etihad operates 24 Boeing 777s with 25 more on order, and has an additional \$8.7 billion order for Boeing 787-10s. UAE airlines now serve 11 US gateway cities from Dubai and Abu Dhabi with more than 250 weekly nonstop flights. <http://politi.co/2AtLDMj>

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To: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Abboud, Michael[abboud.michael@epa.gov]
From: Hewitt, James
Sent: Thur 9/7/2017 1:13:29 PM
Subject: FOR APPROVAL/EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17
EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17.docx

EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

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The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration. Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official. Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

The Daily Caller: Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday. Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

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Red State: EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing. The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday. After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email. That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

The Washington Examiner: EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official. unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

The South Bend Tribune: EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own. The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The Associated Press: EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday. An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

National Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

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The Associated Press: Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida. The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early

Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

Bloomberg: Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December. Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump. "Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

The Wall Street Journal: President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year. Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February. The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/epa-workforce-approaching-lowest-levels-since-reagan/>

EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

By Elizabeth Harrington, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration.

Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official.

Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

Last month, 374 employees took buyouts. An additional 33 employees are retiring at the end of September, and 45 others are considering early retirement offers.

If half of those individuals also choose to leave the agency, EPA employment levels would fall below 14,440. The last time EPA was at an actual employment level of 14,440 was in 1988, when Ronald Reagan was president. The number of employees at EPA fell even lower in 1989, before peaking at 18,110 in 1999.

Scott Pruitt, the EPA administrator, said the agency is dedicated to shrinking the size of government. The Trump administration's goal is to cut the EPA workforce by 25 percent.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

The agency could shrink even more, as 20.17 percent of the EPA's employees are eligible to retire right now, according to the EPA's Resources Management Office.

Another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the EPA official.

The EPA has two buyout programs, VSIP and VERA, which give employees cash payments to incentivize early retirement. Maximum payments are typically \$25,000 for employees who are over 50 and have worked at the agency for at least 20 years. The average EPA employee makes \$113,820.

Several employees who have claimed they are retiring in protest of the new Republican administration, have been eligible for early retirement.

In one case, Elizabeth Southerland, the former director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, said she was quitting on principle over President Trump's budget request to reduce the agency's spending to \$5.7 billion.

Southerland, who earned a \$250,000 salary with a \$64,000 bonus, was eligible for early retirement, and made her protest two months after the budget was released.

The NTK Network obtained an email from Southerland where she said she was retiring because of family issues, not because of Trump, Pruitt, or the budget proposal.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/09/06/nearly-50-percent-of-the-epas-entire-workforce-are-eligible-to- retire-within-next-five-years/>

Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

By Chris White, 9/6/17

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday.

Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

The revelation comes as the EPA continues offering buyout packages to employees.

Nearly 362 EPA employees accepted a voluntary buyout, or a VERA, earlier this month, while another 12 employees retired in August, the documents show. Another 33 employees are expected to retire at the end of September, and an additional 45 employees are considering buyout offers.

EPA employment levels could tumble to 14,428, which would be lower than the 14,440-level found during the latter half of the Ronald Reagan presidency. The agency had 15,561 employees during former President Barack Obama's final term in office, all of whom earned an average salary of \$113,820. The average American income is about \$50,000.

The buyouts are helping the Trump administration reduce the size of government, EPA chief Scott Pruitt said in a statement Wednesday.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," said Pruitt, who sued the agency nearly a dozen times during his time as Oklahoma's attorney general. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government ... staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

Pruitt is responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump's mission of rolling back significant portions of his Democratic predecessor's climate agenda. He was also one of the officials who helped convince the president to leave the Paris climate agreement, which obligated the U.S. cut greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

The document comes shortly after reports from July showed the EPA planned to buy out 1,227 positions, 655 of which will be from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. EPA indicated a willingness to offer employees up to \$25,000 in cash in exchange for them leaving, which is standard practice for federal employees hoping to retire early.

The largest number of buyouts, 183, will come from the Office of Research and Development. EPA will also offer buyouts to 98 employees at the Office of Administration and Resource Management, and make the same offer to 94 workers at the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

Red State

<https://www.redstate.com/streiff/2017/09/06/epa-reaches-staffing-levels-not-seen-since-reagan-administration/>

EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

By Streiff, 9/6/17

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing.

The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday.

After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email.

That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

C. Northcote Parkinson, British economist and writer of age-of-sail fiction, once wrote about The Law of Multiplication of Subordinates in his essay called Parkinson's Law. The EPA has epitomized this phenomenon. What makes it worse is that the EPA hires smart, energetic, myopic, true-believer, enviro-nazis who are not content with an "eight-and-the-gate" mentality but willingly put in extra hours to make sure you feel the hand of the Environmental Deity... and law enforcement, if need be.

Over time, the EPA has ventured out from its core functions to worrying about livestock flatulence as a cause of global warming and rating appliances on energy efficiency...when it is

not causing massive toxic waste spills and running from responsibility.

Though I fully realize that this is merely another futile gesture by the Trump administration and doesn't really count as an accomplishment because it is an act that can be changed by any future president, I do have to say the strategy of forcing the EPA to restrict its activities, despite its penchant for do-gooder nannyism and outright legal thuggery, to core functions by starving it of personnel is welcome.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-staff-levels-to-hit-30-year-low-this-month/article/2633530>

EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

By John Siciliano, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official.

EPA unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

Last week, 362 employees accepted voluntary buyouts and another 12 employees retired, the official said. On top of that, another 33 employees are set to retire at the end of September and 45 other employees are considering buyout offers, the officials said.

The official explained that the agency is "incredibly top-heavy" and that 25 percent of current employees are eligible to retire with full benefits today. These employees are being encouraged to retire along with another 25 percent that can retire in the next five years, the official explained.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement that he is encouraging employees to retire early. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," he said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

With early retirements, the total number of employees let go could rise to around 3,000, which fits with Trump's budget blueprint.

Meanwhile, senior House Republicans are asking Pruitt if the buyouts are going through the necessary oversight that the Obama administration had avoided when it bought out some employees three years ago.

House Energy and Commerce Committee leaders want to be briefed on the EPA buyout plan, according to a letter to Pruitt sent Tuesday evening. Reps. Greg Walden, R-OR, chairman of the energy committee, and Tim Murphy, R-PA, chairman of committee's oversight panel, said they want to ensure that EPA's goal of finalizing these buyouts this month acts in the best interest of the taxpayer, and are worried Trump might be using the same flawed process that Obama used.

The last round of buyouts made in 2014 did not go through proper channels for approval. The EPA Office of the Inspector General said that many of the positions the previous administration provided buyouts for were not eliminated, according to the letter.

"While EPA has made some progress improving the agency's use of buyouts, given the lack of internal controls during the previous administration, the committee wants to ensure that the separation payments becoming effective in September 2017 are an efficient use of taxpayer money and are in compliance with [Office of Personnel Management] requirements," according to the letter.

Walden and Murphy want to be briefed on the buyout process by Sept. 15. "We will respond to Chairman Walden through the proper channel," an agency spokesman said.

The Southbend Tribune

http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/epa-to-test-homes-soil-near-lasalle-park-superfund-site/article_94dd403d-6a7c-516e-9ac8-a56bab04748a.html

EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

By Jeff Parrott, 9/7/17

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own.

The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The agency, under a mandate from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also announced it soon wants to test soil in yards of homes near the park. Property owners must sign access agreements allowing the testing, which the EPA hopes to start by Oct. 5, issuing a final report by year's end.

The EPA wants to test soil in the yards of homes west of the park to Kenmore Street, east to Kaley Street and south to a line parallel with Newcombe Street.

But in a question-and-answer session following an EPA slideshow presentation, several people in the crowd of about 30 urged the agency to widen its scope. Tom Zmyslo said he worked at Honeywell, corporate successor to Bendix Corp., for more than 30 years, and he recalled an employee meeting in 2001 where workers were shown a map of groundwater contamination all around the plant.

Zmyslo said he is concerned that Honeywell could have contaminated drinking water wells that people still use in the Ardmore area, which is located just west of the city limits. Jenny Davison, EPA's remedial project manager for the LaSalle Park (also called Beck's Lake) site, responded that groundwater hasn't been studied at the LaSalle Park site because people living in the immediate area are served by the city's water system.

Davison said the agency welcomes any information about Honeywell's operations, and after the meeting, officials spoke further with Zmyslo.

Several other audience members said they live in homes just beyond the immediate LaSalle Park area, in some cases a block or two away, from where EPA plans to test residential yard soils, and they want their yards tested too. Davison said the EPA might consider enlarging the testing area if contamination levels are high enough in the first homes' yards.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 2009 found elevated levels of arsenic in the yards of nearby homes. Samples from six homes showed arsenic levels that were more than three times what could be expected to occur naturally. That was enough contamination to warrant further, more comprehensive testing, but not enough to require cleanup, said Keith Fusinski, an EPA toxicologist.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who in 2013 wrote the EPA a letter asking the agency to engage more with residents about the issue, did not attend the meeting but sent members of his staff.

"The EPA scheduled tonight's meeting without regard for the city's schedule," his spokesman, Mark Bode, said in a written statement. "The city plans to hold a meeting once it has received the results from the EPA and is able to share the plan for moving forward. We anticipate holding the meeting on site, at the Charles Black Recreation Center."

The Associated Press

<http://www.newson6.com/story/36308077/epa-oklahoma-oil-companys-houston-spill-cleaned-up>

EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

By AP 9/7/17

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday.

An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

Magellan Midstream Partners spokesman Bruce Heine says his company reported the spill at its facility in the east Houston suburb of Galena Park on Sunday and has assisted in cleanup.

Heine said the spill resulted from Harvey's strike on Texas.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/77a9a82f58d04bdbb122832b297b199d/Hurricane-Irma-toll-hits-10,-increasing-threat-for-Florida>

Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

By Danica Coto and Anika Kentish, 9/7/17

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida.

The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

“This could easily be the most costly storm in U.S. history, which is saying a lot considering what just happened two weeks ago,” said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami, alluding to the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told France Info radio that eight had died and 23 injured in the country’s Caribbean island territories, and he said the toll on Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthelemy could be higher because rescue teams have yet to finish their inspection of the islands.

“The reconnaissance will really start at daybreak,” Collomb said.

At a news conference, Collomb also said 100,000 food rations have been sent to the islands, the equivalent of four days of supplies.

“It’s a tragedy, we’ll need to rebuild both islands,” he said. “Most of the schools have been destroyed.”

French President Emmanuel Macron’s office said he will go to the islands as soon as weather conditions permit.

In the United Kingdom, the government said Irma inflicted “severe and in places critical” damage to the British overseas territory of Anguilla. Foreign Office Minister Alan Duncan said the Caribbean island took the full force of the hurricane. He told lawmakers on Thursday that the British Virgin islands have also suffered “severe damage.”

Irma blacked out much of Puerto Rico, raking the U.S. territory with heavy wind and rain while staying just out to sea, and it headed early Thursday toward the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

To the east, authorities struggled to get aid to small Caribbean islands devastated by the storm’s record 185 mph (298 kph) winds. Communications were difficult with areas hit by Irma, and information on damage trickled out.

Nearly every building on Barbuda was damaged when the hurricane’s core crossed almost directly over the island early Wednesday and about 60 percent of its roughly 1,400 residents were left homeless, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press.

“It is just really a horrendous situation,” Browne said after returning to Antigua from a plane trip to the neighboring island.

He said roads and telecommunications systems were wrecked and recovery would take months, if not years. A 2-year-old child was killed as a family tried to escape a damaged home during the storm, Browne told the AP.

One death also was reported in the nearby island of Anguilla, where officials reported extensive damage to the airport, hospitals, shelters and school and said 90 percent of roads are impassible, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

The agency also reported “major damage” to houses and commercial buildings in the British Virgin Islands.

On St. Thomas in the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands, Laura Strickling spent 12 hours hunkered down with her husband and 1-year-old daughter in a boarded-up basement apartment with no power as the storm raged outside. They emerged to find the lush island in tatters. Many of their neighbors' homes were damaged and once-dense vegetation was largely gone.

"There are no leaves. It is crazy. One of the things we loved about St. Thomas is that it was so green. And it's gone," Strickling said. "It will take years for this community to get back on its feet."

Significant damage was also reported on St. Martin, an island split between French and Dutch control. Photos and video circulating on social media showed major damage to the airport in Philipsburg and the coastal village of Marigot heavily flooded. France sent emergency food and water there and to the French island of St. Bart's, where Irma ripped off roofs and knocked out electricity.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Thursday the storm "caused widescale destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses."

"There is no power, no gasoline, no running water. Houses are under water, cars are floating through the streets, inhabitants are sitting in the dark, in ruined houses and are cut off from the outside world," he said.

By Thursday morning, the center of the storm was about 110 miles (180 kilometers) north of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and was moving west-northwest near 17 mph (28 kph).

More than half the island of Puerto Rico was without power, leaving 900,000 in the dark and nearly 50,000 without water, the U.S. territory's emergency management agency said in the midst of the storm. Fourteen hospitals were using generators after losing power, and trees and light poles were strewn across roads.

Puerto Rico's public power company warned before the storm hit that some areas could be left without power from four to six months because its staff has been reduced and its infrastructure weakened by the island's decade-long economic slump.

President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies to remove debris and give other services that will largely be paid for by the U.S. government.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center predicted Irma would remain at Category 4 or 5 for the next day or two as passes just to the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti on Thursday, nears the Turks & Caicos and parts of the Bahamas by Thursday night and skirts Cuba on Friday night into Saturday.

It will then likely head north toward Florida, where people were rushing to board up homes, fill cars with gasoline and find a route to safety.

Gov. Rick Scott, who has mobilized parts of the state's National Guard, declared a state of emergency and asked the governors of Alabama and Georgia to waive trucking regulations so gasoline tankers can get fuel into Florida quickly to ease shortages.

An estimated 25,000 people or more left the Florida Keys after all visitors were ordered to clear out, causing bumper-to-bumper traffic on the single highway that links the chain of low-lying islands to the mainland.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Katia hovered in the southern Gulf of Mexico, threatening to hit the vulnerable Mexican coast as a Category 2 or 3 hurricane, possibly late Friday or early Saturday. It had winds of 80 mph (130 kph) and was located about 210 miles (335 kilometers) east of Tampico, Mexico.

And a third hurricane, Jose, was growing far out in the Atlantic. It was no immediate threat to land, though the forecast track showed it could affect the Irma-blasted Leeward Islands over the weekend. Hurricane Jose had winds of about 90 mph (150 kph). It was centered about 815 miles

(1,310 kilometers) east of the Lesser Antilles and moving west-northwest at 18 mph (30 kph).

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-07/trump-s-surprise-deal-with-democrats-sets-up-christmas-showdown>

Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

By Laura Litvan, Anna Edgerton, and Erik Wasson, 9/7/17

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December.

Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump.

"Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

During an Oval Office meeting Wednesday, Trump accepted a proposal by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and his House counterpart, Nancy Pelosi, to tie a three-month suspension of the debt limit to a Hurricane Harvey relief measure -- and throw in a stopgap continuing resolution to fund the government into December.

The episode provided the latest illustration of the bind Republicans find themselves in. Even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress, they've been unable to set aside their own differences to get much done. Instead, this latest deal may have simply handed

Democrats the upper hand heading into a confrontational end-of-the-year negotiation.

The agreement sets up what could be a major fight in December over government funding that is expected to include Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico and his decision to end a program that lets young undocumented immigrants stay in the U.S., as well as perhaps the debt ceiling.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, who was in the meeting with Trump, didn't see it coming. Hours before Trump's deal, he had told reporters that the Democratic proposal for a short-term debt limit deal would be "unworkable" and "ridiculous."

By late Wednesday, Senate Republicans released a new version of a Harvey aid bill that included the debt ceiling extension and would fund the government through Dec. 8. It also would nearly double the total disaster funding to \$15.25 billion from what the House passed earlier in the day. The additional funding would go toward the Community Development Block Grant program to address housing needs in disaster zones.

Extraordinary Measures

The actual fight over the debt limit could slip into 2018, since the Treasury Department can usually deploy so-called extraordinary measures to extend its ability to operate. The drop-dead date could come as early as February if tax refund outlays are "relatively high," according to Jefferies economists Ward McCarthy and Thomas Simons.

Trump's deal with Democrats did soothe the most immediate concerns in the short-term Treasury market, with rates on Treasury bills maturing around the previous late-September debt-limit deadline plunging. But they surged on securities coming due around mid-December, suggesting Wall Street sees more legislative strife ahead.

"All this really means is that while it's unlikely the U.S. would ever default on Treasury bills, this move today just pushes this risk further out the curve," said Jerome Schneider, head of the short-term and funding desk at Pacific Investment Management Co., which manages \$1.6 trillion

in assets.

The White House tried to sell the deal as a way to “clear the decks” for a tax overhaul, as Trump’s legislative director, Marc Short, put it to reporters.

Longer-term Treasuries also declined, suggesting investors saw better prospects that lawmakers will act on measures to spur economic growth.

“The market is pricing in less gridlock in Washington,” said Alex Li, head of rates strategy at Credit Agricole. “The market seems to be suggesting that the administration and congressional leaders are more open now to get something done in terms of the legislative agenda,” including addressing the nation’s tax system.

But conservatives were fuming over the deal, with one senior Republican aide saying that the deal undercut GOP leaders and bolstered the power of Democrats in Congress.

Asked about the compromise, Freedom Caucus member Ted Yoho of Florida said sarcastically, “It’s great to be in the majority.”

‘Deal is Bad’

"The Pelosi-Schumer-Trump deal is bad," Republican Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska said in a statement.

Trump himself might have agreed, at least back in 2013 when he was still considering a run for the White House. He wrote on Twitter then, "The worst negotiators in history (otherwise known as Republicans) have just offered to suspend debt ceiling for four months. Pathetic!"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to put the best face on the deal while noting that Trump cut it with Democratic leaders.

“The president can speak for himself,” McConnell told reporters. “But his feeling was that we needed to come together, to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis.”

Congress is rushing to pass Hurricane Harvey relief funds by the end of the week because the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s disaster-relief fund is set to run out of money Friday as a more powerful storm, Hurricane Irma, bears down on Florida.

The House voted 419-3 on Wednesday to pass \$7.85 billion to provide relief to tens of thousands of homeowners from flooding caused by Harvey in Texas and other parts of the Gulf Coast. The measure includes \$7.4 billion in FEMA disaster funds and \$450 million for the Small Business Administration. Additional FEMA funding is to be provided later, according to House aides.

Shortly after the vote, Trump and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with Republican and Democratic congressional leaders at the White House. McConnell, Ryan and Mnuchin pushed for adding a debt-limit extension of as long as 18 months to the Harvey bill, according to several people with knowledge of the discussion. A three-month debt-limit deal was the last thing Mnuchin wanted, an administration official said.

But Trump said he wanted a deal, and he accepted the Democrats’ offer of a three-month debt-limit measure, one person said. At that point, McConnell stepped in to say a short-term government spending bill should also be added.

Several leaders of conservative groups said they blamed Republican leaders, not Trump, for the deal to add the debt-limit and spending measures to the House bill. They said McConnell and Ryan hadn’t been able to push forward a conservative plan to raise the debt limit in a measure that cut spending.

“This is going to be very bad for our common goal of fundamental tax reform,” Adam Brandon,

president of the conservative FreedomWorks group, told reporters in a conference call. “This deal is straight out of the swamp.”

‘Taken Aback’

“I’m a little taken aback by it,” said Representative Mark Walker, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the Republican Study Committee. “Usually you get a heads up” on a major policy decision.

Asked if this deal undercuts Republican leadership’s ability to negotiate with Democrats, Walker replied, “It does.”

Walker said he will present a letter to Ryan on Thursday with a list of policy suggestions that would get more Republicans to support a debt limit deal. It will contain 19 specific suggestions, he said.

Republicans appeared resigned to the notion that the combined measure would likely pass both chambers of Congress, carried by Democratic votes. But a number of Republicans said they would vote against it.

The attempt to tie the Harvey aid passed in the House to the debt limit “is a poison pill & a disservice to those who are suffering,” Representative Richard Hudson of North Carolina tweeted. He said the Senate should pass the House measure without adding more provisions.

FAA and Flood Insurance

The deal still left out a few key priorities that Congress will have to address by the end of the month. Lawmakers still need to pass an authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration so that it can keep operating after Sept. 30. They also have to pass a renewal of the nation’s flood insurance program, a high priority in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

Democrats, for their part, luxuriated in the unexpected win.

“Today was a good day in a generally very partisan town,” Schumer told reporters. “And let’s hope we can continue to work together for the good of Americans, for the good of the working families who so much need our help.”

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/president-trump-unlikely-to-nominate-gary-cohn-to-become-fed-chairman-1504731461> **President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman**

By Michael C. Bender, Harriet Torry, and Nick Timiraos, 9/6/17

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president’s thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank’s leadership and policies next year.

Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February.

The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world’s most important central bank. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said Wednesday he will resign in mid-October for personal reasons, adding another vacancy to the three others on the powerful seven-member Fed board of governors. His departure accelerates Mr. Trump’s opportunity to put his stamp on the central bank.

Candidate Trump was critical of the central bank and Ms. Yellen last year, publicly chiding her

during the campaign for keeping interest rates too low, which Mr. Trump said benefited Democrats.

The shift in Mr. Cohn's prospects for the top Fed job arises largely from his criticism of Mr. Trump's response to the violence in Charlottesville, Va., the people familiar with the matter said.

The president said in the Journal interview that he was also considering whether to nominate Ms. Yellen for a second term. Mr. Trump has told people that he is impressed with Ms. Yellen, leaving them with the sense he might ask her to serve another term.

The change in Mr. Cohn's chances potentially bolsters her odds. Other names that have been discussed by Mr. Trump and his team as possible nominees to top Fed posts include former governors Lawrence Lindsey and Kevin Warsh, former BB&T Bank chief executive John Allison, and Stanford University economist John Taylor, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The White House has been considering nominating Marvin Goodfriend, a former research director at the Richmond Fed who is a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, to the Fed's board, the people familiar said. One possibility would be to nominate an incoming board member, such as Mr. Goodfriend, or a current board member, such as Fed governor Jerome Powell, to the vice-chair post.

Mr. Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, has been running the White House search for Fed chief. A senior administration official said "the president is considering several candidates." Mr. Cohn's office directed questions to the White House.

White House spokeswoman Natalie Strom said Mr. Cohn is "focused on his responsibilities...including a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver meaningful tax reform that creates jobs and grows the economy." Mr. Cohn may have doomed his chances for the top Fed job with comments he made to the Financial Times last month, according to people close to the president.

The former investment banker had told associates that he was disgusted by Mr. Trump's performance immediately after the president's combative news conference on Aug. 15 about the Charlottesville events, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Cohn stood near Mr. Trump at the news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower, which White House officials had intended to focus on the president's push for investment in infrastructure.

Asked if he considered resigning after the news conference, Mr. Cohn told the Financial Times that he was "reluctant to leave my post." He also said the Trump administration "can and must do better" to condemn hate groups. "Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the KKK," Mr. Cohn told the newspaper.

Mr. Trump wasn't aware such a blunt critique was coming, said one person familiar with the president's thinking. One White House official said the president visibly bristles at the mention of his economic adviser.

Mr. Trump had been eager to talk about the possibility of appointing Mr. Cohn as the next Fed chairman when he spoke about it during the Journal interview. At the time, the president said he had "gained great respect for Gary" during their time together in the West Wing.

A White House official said that Mr. Cohn, a former Goldman Sachs executive, may be able to repair his relationship with the president.

Mr. Cohn is one of the key White House hands shepherding an overhaul of the federal tax code through Congress. If successful, Mr. Cohn may find himself in better standing, the person said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump has nominated Randal Quarles, a private-equity executive who served in the Bush administrations, for one opening on the Fed board, but has yet to name his other picks.

A Senate committee is set to vote on Mr. Quarles' nomination as the Fed's vice chair for bank regulation on Thursday, and he is expected to ultimately win confirmation. Nominations for all board positions, including the chair and vice chair, are subject to Senate confirmation.

Mr. Fischer's departure gives the White House a wider range of options in considering how to remake the Fed, but it also adds to the challenge Mr. Trump faces in managing the leadership turnover without roiling markets.

Mr. Fischer's term as Fed vice chairman was due to end in June 2018, although his term as governor wouldn't have ended until Jan. 31, 2020. Several people who know him say he has been addressing family health issues. Mr. Fischer is planning to attend the central bank's next policy gathering Sept. 19 and Sept. 20, when the Fed is expected to announce plans to begin shrinking its portfolio of bonds and other assets accumulated during the financial crisis.

Fed officials in June raised their benchmark federal-funds rate to a range between 1% and 1.25% and penciled in one more rate increase this year. Analysts saw Mr. Fischer as a centrist voice as the Fed's second-in-command, and slightly less inclined to keep rates low to spur the economy than Ms. Yellen.

However, other policy decisions beyond December are clouded by the leadership succession question, and that uncertainty could increasingly weigh on markets.

Every president since Ronald Reagan has asked the standing Fed leader to stay in the job at the start of his presidency, which has served to underscore the central bank's relative independence from politics on monetary policy. If Mr. Trump doesn't follow that pattern, Ms. Yellen would be just the third Fed leader since 1934 to serve only one term.

Ms. Yellen hasn't said whether she would like to serve a second term, but some friends and former colleagues say her long record of public service and her devotion to the Fed are clues that she would accept a nomination if it were offered.

Nearly three in four economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal this month said Ms. Yellen should be reappointed as Fed chair. Around two thirds of the same economists said Mr. Cohn is qualified to be chair. The Journal surveyed 56 economists from Sept. 1 to Sept. 5 in its monthly poll.

TRUMP TWEETS

N/A

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EPA Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

The Washington Free Beacon: EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration. Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official. Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

The Daily Caller: Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday. Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

Red State: EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing. The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday. After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email. That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

The Washington Examiner: EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official. unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

The South Bend Tribune: EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own. The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The Associated Press: EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up. EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday. An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

National Morning News Highlights 9.7.17

The Associated Press: Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic

strike on Florida. The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

Bloomberg: Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December. Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump. "Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

The Wall Street Journal: President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year. Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February. The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Washington Free Beacon

<http://freebeacon.com/issues/epa-workforce-approaching-lowest-levels-since-reagan/>

EPA Workforce Approaching Lowest Levels Since Reagan

By Elizabeth Harrington, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency will soon employ the lowest number of workers since the Ronald Reagan administration.

Hundreds of employees have accepted buyouts and taken early retirement since President Donald Trump's inauguration, according to an EPA official.

Congress put a cap on the number of people the EPA can employ at 15,000 in the 2017 omnibus bill. By the end of September, the EPA will employ 14,459 people, with dozens still considering buyout offers.

Last month, 374 employees took buyouts. An additional 33 employees are retiring at the end of September, and 45 others are considering early retirement offers.

If half of those individuals also choose to leave the agency, EPA employment levels would fall below 14,440. The last time EPA was at an actual employment level of 14,440 was in 1988, when Ronald Reagan was president. The number of employees at EPA fell even lower in 1989, before peaking at 18,110 in 1999.

Scott Pruitt, the EPA administrator, said the agency is dedicated to shrinking the size of government. The Trump administration's goal is to cut the EPA workforce by 25 percent.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," Pruitt said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars, and staying true to our core mission of

protecting the environment and American jobs."

The agency could shrink even more, as 20.17 percent of the EPA's employees are eligible to retire right now, according to the EPA's Resources Management Office.

Another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the EPA official.

The EPA has two buyout programs, VSIP and VERA, which give employees cash payments to incentivize early retirement. Maximum payments are typically \$25,000 for employees who are over 50 and have worked at the agency for at least 20 years. The average EPA employee makes \$113,820.

Several employees who have claimed they are retiring in protest of the new Republican administration, have been eligible for early retirement.

In one case, Elizabeth Southerland, the former director of the Office of Science and Technology in EPA's Office of Water, said she was quitting on principle over President Trump's budget request to reduce the agency's spending to \$5.7 billion.

Southerland, who earned a \$250,000 salary with a \$64,000 bonus, was eligible for early retirement, and made her protest two months after the budget was released.

The NTK Network obtained an email from Southerland where she said she was retiring because of family issues, not because of Trump, Pruitt, or the budget proposal.

The Daily Caller

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/09/06/nearly-50-percent-of-the-epas-entire-workforce-are-eligible-to-retire-within-next-five-years/>

Nearly 50 Percent Of The EPA's Entire Workforce Are Eligible To Retire Within Next Five Years

By Chris White, 9/6/17

Half of the Environmental Protection Agency's entire workforce can retire with full benefits within the next five years, according to a review of documents The Daily Caller News Foundation obtained Wednesday.

Nearly 25 percent of the agency's current workforce can retire today with full benefits, while another 25 percent can retire in the next five years with full benefits, according to the documents, which were part of a wider trove of material released to Reuters and TheDCNF.

The revelation comes as the EPA continues offering buyout packages to employees.

Nearly 362 EPA employees accepted a voluntary buyout, or a VERA, earlier this month, while another 12 employees retired in August, the documents show. Another 33 employees are expected to retire at the end of September, and an additional 45 employees are considering buyout offers.

EPA employment levels could tumble to 14,428, which would be lower than the 14,440-level found during the latter half of the Ronald Reagan presidency. The agency had 15,561 employees during former President Barack Obama's final term in office, all of whom earned an average salary of \$113,820. The average American income is about \$50,000.

The buyouts are helping the Trump administration reduce the size of government, EPA chief Scott Pruitt said in a statement Wednesday.

"We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," said Pruitt, who sued the agency nearly a dozen times during his time as Oklahoma's attorney general. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the

size of government ... staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs.”

Pruitt is responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump’s mission of rolling back significant portions of his Democratic predecessor’s climate agenda. He was also one of the officials who helped convince the president to leave the Paris climate agreement, which obligated the U.S. cut greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

The document comes shortly after reports from July showed the EPA planned to buy out 1,227 positions, 655 of which will be from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. EPA indicated a willingness to offer employees up to \$25,000 in cash in exchange for them leaving, which is standard practice for federal employees hoping to retire early.

The largest number of buyouts, 183, will come from the Office of Research and Development. EPA will also offer buyouts to 98 employees at the Office of Administration and Resource Management, and make the same offer to 94 workers at the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

Red State

<https://www.redstate.com/streiff/2017/09/06/epa-reaches-staffing-levels-not-seen-since-reagan-administration/>

EPA Reaches Staffing Levels Not Seen Since The Reagan Administration

By Streiff, 9/6/17

What is going on at the EPA is nothing short of amazing.

The workforce at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is on course to fall to its lowest level since Ronald Reagan was president, an agency official said on Tuesday.

After buyouts and retirements, that number could drop to 14,428 by October, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in an email.

That would be below the fiscal 1988 level, when EPA staffing was 14,440, the official noted. A further 2,998 employees, or just over 20 percent of the total, are eligible to retire now, the official said.

C. Northcote Parkinson, British economist and writer of age-of-sail fiction, once wrote about The Law of Multiplication of Subordinates in his essay called Parkinson’s Law. The EPA has epitomized this phenomenon. What makes it worse is that the EPA hires smart, energetic, myopic, true-believer, enviro-nazis who are not content with an “eight-and-the-gate” mentality but willingly put in extra hours to make sure you feel the hand of the Environmental Deity... and law enforcement, if need be.

Over time, the EPA has ventured out from its core functions to worrying about livestock flatulence as a cause of global warming and rating appliances on energy efficiency...when it is not causing massive toxic waste spills and running from responsibility.

Though I fully realize that this is merely another futile gesture by the Trump administration and doesn’t really count as an accomplishment because it is an act that can be changed by any future president, I do have to say the strategy of forcing the EPA to restrict its activities, despite its penchant for do-gooder nannyism and outright legal thuggery, to core functions by starving it of personnel is welcome.

The Washington Examiner

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/epa-staff-levels-to-hit-30-year-low-this-month/article/2633530>

EPA staff levels to hit 30-year low this month

By John Siciliano, 9/6/17

The Environmental Protection Agency's workforce numbers are expected to drop to levels unseen since President Ronald Reagan was in office through an employee buyout program that kicks in this month, according to an agency official.

EPA unveiled its program to begin buying out employees in June to meet President Trump's goal of reining in the agency's budget. With combined buyouts and retirements, the EPA will go from an employee ceiling of 15,000 employees to 14,428. That is below the 14,440 employees at the agency seen in fiscal year 1988 when President Reagan was still in office, the official noted.

Last week, 362 employees accepted voluntary buyouts and another 12 employees retired, the official said. On top of that, another 33 employees are set to retire at the end of September and 45 other employees are considering buyout offers, the officials said.

The official explained that the agency is "incredibly top-heavy" and that 25 percent of current employees are eligible to retire with full benefits today. These employees are being encouraged to retire along with another 25 percent that can retire in the next five years, the official explained.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement that he is encouraging employees to retire early. "We're giving long-serving, hard-working employees the opportunity to retire early," he said. "We're proud to report that we're reducing the size of government, protecting taxpayer dollars and staying true to our core mission of protecting the environment and American jobs."

With early retirements, the total number of employees let go could rise to around 3,000, which fits with Trump's budget blueprint.

Meanwhile, senior House Republicans are asking Pruitt if the buyouts are going through the necessary oversight that the Obama administration had avoided when it bought out some employees three years ago.

House Energy and Commerce Committee leaders want to be briefed on the EPA buyout plan, according to a letter to Pruitt sent Tuesday evening. Reps. Greg Walden, R-OR, chairman of the energy committee, and Tim Murphy, R-PA, chairman of committee's oversight panel, said they want to ensure that EPA's goal of finalizing these buyouts this month acts in the best interest of the taxpayer, and are worried Trump might be using the same flawed process that Obama used.

The last round of buyouts made in 2014 did not go through proper channels for approval. The EPA Office of the Inspector General said that many of the positions the previous administration provided buyouts for were not eliminated, according to the letter.

"While EPA has made some progress improving the agency's use of buyouts, given the lack of internal controls during the previous administration, the committee wants to ensure that the separation payments becoming effective in September 2017 are an efficient use of taxpayer money and are in compliance with [Office of Personnel Management] requirements," according to the letter.

Walden and Murphy want to be briefed on the buyout process by Sept. 15. "We will respond to Chairman Walden through the proper channel," an agency spokesman said.

The Southbend Tribune

http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/epa-to-test-homes-soil-near-lasalle-park-superfund-site/article_94dd403d-6a7c-516e-9ac8-a56bab04748a.html

EPA to test homes' soil near LaSalle Park Superfund site in South Bend

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent nine staffers here Wednesday to deliver two messages at a public meeting about a former hazardous waste dump, but several residents who attended had a message of their own.

The EPA wanted to first tell the public that soil samples taken last summer from LaSalle Park, a federal Superfund site since 2013, indicated the park is safe for recreational use, such as playing soccer, baseball, basketball, picnicking, sledding, walking and jogging. State and federal officials have known since 1984 that several industrial companies, including Bendix Corp., had dumped hazardous wastes at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, before it became a park.

The agency, under a mandate from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also announced it soon wants to test soil in yards of homes near the park. Property owners must sign access agreements allowing the testing, which the EPA hopes to start by Oct. 5, issuing a final report by year's end.

The EPA wants to test soil in the yards of homes west of the park to Kenmore Street, east to Kaley Street and south to a line parallel with Newcombe Street.

But in a question-and-answer session following an EPA slideshow presentation, several people in the crowd of about 30 urged the agency to widen its scope. Tom Zmyslo said he worked at Honeywell, corporate successor to Bendix Corp., for more than 30 years, and he recalled an employee meeting in 2001 where workers were shown a map of groundwater contamination all around the plant.

Zmyslo said he is concerned that Honeywell could have contaminated drinking water wells that people still use in the Ardmore area, which is located just west of the city limits. Jenny Davison, EPA's remedial project manager for the LaSalle Park (also called Beck's Lake) site, responded that groundwater hasn't been studied at the LaSalle Park site because people living in the immediate area are served by the city's water system.

Davison said the agency welcomes any information about Honeywell's operations, and after the meeting, officials spoke further with Zmyslo.

Several other audience members said they live in homes just beyond the immediate LaSalle Park area, in some cases a block or two away, from where EPA plans to test residential yard soils, and they want their yards tested too. Davison said the EPA might consider enlarging the testing area if contamination levels are high enough in the first homes' yards.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 2009 found elevated levels of arsenic in the yards of nearby homes. Samples from six homes showed arsenic levels that were more than three times what could be expected to occur naturally. That was enough contamination to warrant further, more comprehensive testing, but not enough to require cleanup, said Keith Fusinski, an EPA toxicologist.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who in 2013 wrote the EPA a letter asking the agency to engage more with residents about the issue, did not attend the meeting but sent members of his staff.

"The EPA scheduled tonight's meeting without regard for the city's schedule," his spokesman, Mark Bode, said in a written statement. "The city plans to hold a meeting once it has received the results from the EPA and is able to share the plan for moving forward. We anticipate holding the meeting on site, at the Charles Black Recreation Center."

The Associated Press

<http://www.newson6.com/story/36308077/epa-oklahoma-oil-companys-houston-spill-cleaned-up>

EPA: Oklahoma Oil Company's Houston Spill Cleaned Up

By AP 9/7/17

A spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency says a 2,500-gallon oil spill at an Oklahoma company's Houston-area facility has been cleaned up.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said the agency had closely coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, which reported the cleanup was completed Tuesday.

An EPA news release sent Wednesday night did not include details about the spill, including whether it endangered drinking water or forced evacuations.

Magellan Midstream Partners spokesman Bruce Heine says his company reported the spill at its facility in the east Houston suburb of Galena Park on Sunday and has assisted in cleanup.

Heine said the spill resulted from Harvey's strike on Texas.

The Associated Press

<https://apnews.com/77a9a82f58d04b4dbb122832b297b199d/Hurricane-Irma-toll-hits-10,-increasing-threat-for-Florida>

Hurricane Irma toll hits 10, increasing threat for Florida

By Danica Coto and Anika Kentish, 9/7/17

Fearsome Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation across the northern Caribbean, leaving at least 10 dead and thousands homeless after destroying buildings and uprooting trees on a track Thursday that could lead to a catastrophic strike on Florida.

The most potent Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever, Irma weakened only slightly Thursday morning and remained a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of 180 mph (285 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

The storm was increasingly likely to rip into heavily populated South Florida early Sunday, prompting the governor to declare an emergency and officials to impose mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the Miami metro area and the Florida Keys. Forecasters said it could punish the entire Atlantic coast of Florida and rage on into Georgia and South Carolina.

"This could easily be the most costly storm in U.S. history, which is saying a lot considering what just happened two weeks ago," said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami, alluding to the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told France Info radio that eight had died and 23 injured in the country's Caribbean island territories, and he said the toll on Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthelemy could be higher because rescue teams have yet to finish their inspection of the islands.

"The reconnaissance will really start at daybreak," Collomb said.

At a news conference, Collomb also said 100,000 food rations have been sent to the islands, the equivalent of four days of supplies.

"It's a tragedy, we'll need to rebuild both islands," he said. "Most of the schools have been destroyed."

French President Emmanuel Macron's office said he will go to the islands as soon as weather conditions permit.

In the United Kingdom, the government said Irma inflicted "severe and in places critical" damage to the British overseas

territory of Anguilla. Foreign Office Minister Alan Duncan said the Caribbean island took the full force of the hurricane. He told lawmakers on Thursday that the British Virgin islands have also suffered “severe damage.”

Irma blacked out much of Puerto Rico, raking the U.S. territory with heavy wind and rain while staying just out to sea, and it headed early Thursday toward the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

To the east, authorities struggled to get aid to small Caribbean islands devastated by the storm’s record 185 mph (298 kph) winds. Communications were difficult with areas hit by Irma, and information on damage trickled out.

Nearly every building on Barbuda was damaged when the hurricane’s core crossed almost directly over the island early Wednesday and about 60 percent of its roughly 1,400 residents were left homeless, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press.

“It is just really a horrendous situation,” Browne said after returning to Antigua from a plane trip to the neighboring island.

He said roads and telecommunications systems were wrecked and recovery would take months, if not years. A 2-year-old child was killed as a family tried to escape a damaged home during the storm, Browne told the AP.

One death also was reported in the nearby island of Anguilla, where officials reported extensive damage to the airport, hospitals, shelters and school and said 90 percent of roads are impassible, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

The agency also reported “major damage” to houses and commercial buildings in the British Virgin Islands.

On St. Thomas in the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands, Laura Strickling spent 12 hours hunkered down with her husband and 1-year-old daughter in a boarded-up basement apartment with no power as the storm raged outside. They emerged to find the lush island in tatters. Many of their neighbors’ homes were damaged and once-dense vegetation was largely gone.

“There are no leaves. It is crazy. One of the things we loved about St. Thomas is that it was so green. And it’s gone,” Strickling said. “It will take years for this community to get back on its feet.”

Significant damage was also reported on St. Martin, an island split between French and Dutch control. Photos and video circulating on social media showed major damage to the airport in Philipsburg and the coastal village of Marigot heavily flooded. France sent emergency food and water there and to the French island of St. Bart’s, where Irma ripped off roofs and knocked out electricity.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Thursday the storm “caused widescale destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses.”

“There is no power, no gasoline, no running water. Houses are under water, cars are floating through the streets, inhabitants are sitting in the dark, in ruined houses and are cut off from the outside world,” he said.

By Thursday morning, the center of the storm was about 110 miles (180 kilometers) north of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and was moving west-northwest near 17 mph (28 kph).

More than half the island of Puerto Rico was without power, leaving 900,000 in the dark and nearly 50,000 without water, the U.S. territory’s emergency management agency said in the midst of the storm. Fourteen hospitals were using generators after losing power, and trees and light poles were strewn across roads.

Puerto Rico's public power company warned before the storm hit that some areas could be left without power from four to six months because its staff has been reduced and its infrastructure weakened by the island's decade-long economic slump.

President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies to remove debris and give other services that will largely be paid for by the U.S. government.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center predicted Irma would remain at Category 4 or 5 for the next day or two as passes just to the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti on Thursday, nears the Turks & Caicos and parts of the Bahamas by Thursday night and skirts Cuba on Friday night into Saturday.

It will then likely head north toward Florida, where people were rushing to board up homes, fill cars with gasoline and find a route to safety.

Gov. Rick Scott, who has mobilized parts of the state's National Guard, declared a state of emergency and asked the governors of Alabama and Georgia to waive trucking regulations so gasoline tankers can get fuel into Florida quickly to ease shortages.

An estimated 25,000 people or more left the Florida Keys after all visitors were ordered to clear out, causing bumper-to-bumper traffic on the single highway that links the chain of low-lying islands to the mainland.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Katia hovered in the southern Gulf of Mexico, threatening to hit the vulnerable Mexican coast as a Category 2 or 3 hurricane, possibly late Friday or early Saturday. It had winds of 80 mph (130 kph) and was located about 210 miles (335 kilometers) east of Tampico, Mexico.

And a third hurricane, Jose, was growing far out in the Atlantic. It was no immediate threat to land, though the forecast track showed it could affect the Irma-blasted Leeward Islands over the weekend. Hurricane Jose had winds of about 90 mph (150 kph). It was centered about 815 miles (1,310 kilometers) east of the Lesser Antilles and moving west-northwest at 18 mph (30 kph).

Bloomberg

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-07/trump-s-surprise-deal-with-democrats-sets-up-christmas-showdown>

Trump's Surprise Deal With Democrats Sets Up Christmas Showdown

By Laura Litvan, Anna Edgerton, and Erik Wasson, 9/7/17

President Donald Trump's unexpected decision to spurn his Republican allies in Congress by striking a short-term debt-limit deal with Democrats leaves the GOP reeling and lawmakers bracing for a bruising battle in December.

Trump's move undercut GOP leaders in the House and Senate, as well as his own Treasury secretary, who had been arguing for a longer-term extension. It also left Republicans, who were blindsided by the deal, angry and disappointed with their own leaders and, to a lesser degree, Trump.

"Democrats got exactly what they wanted," House Freedom Caucus head Mark Meadows said, adding that the deal "gives them the greatest leverage in the world to get exactly what they want later."

During an Oval Office meeting Wednesday, Trump accepted a proposal by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and his House counterpart, Nancy Pelosi, to tie a three-month suspension of the debt limit to a Hurricane Harvey relief measure -- and throw in a stopgap continuing resolution to fund the government into December.

The episode provided the latest illustration of the bind Republicans find themselves in. Even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress, they've been unable to set aside their own differences to get much done. Instead, this latest deal may have simply handed Democrats the upper hand heading into a confrontational end-of-the-year negotiation.

The agreement sets up what could be a major fight in December over government funding that is expected to include Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico and his decision to end a program that lets young undocumented immigrants stay in the U.S., as well as perhaps the debt ceiling.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, who was in the meeting with Trump, didn't see it coming. Hours before Trump's deal, he had told reporters that the Democratic proposal for a short-term debt limit deal would be "unworkable" and "ridiculous."

By late Wednesday, Senate Republicans released a new version of a Harvey aid bill that included the debt ceiling extension and would fund the government through Dec. 8. It also would nearly double the total disaster funding to \$15.25 billion from what the House passed earlier in the day. The additional funding would go toward the Community Development Block Grant program to address housing needs in disaster zones.

Extraordinary Measures

The actual fight over the debt limit could slip into 2018, since the Treasury Department can usually deploy so-called extraordinary measures to extend its ability to operate. The drop-dead date could come as early as February if tax refund outlays are "relatively high," according to Jefferies economists Ward McCarthy and Thomas Simons.

Trump's deal with Democrats did soothe the most immediate concerns in the short-term Treasury market, with rates on Treasury bills maturing around the previous late-September debt-limit deadline plunging. But they surged on securities coming due around mid-December, suggesting Wall Street sees more legislative strife ahead.

"All this really means is that while it's unlikely the U.S. would ever default on Treasury bills, this move today just pushes this risk further out the curve," said Jerome Schneider, head of the short-term and funding desk at Pacific Investment Management Co., which manages \$1.6 trillion in assets.

The White House tried to sell the deal as a way to "clear the decks" for a tax overhaul, as Trump's legislative director, Marc Short, put it to reporters.

Longer-term Treasuries also declined, suggesting investors saw better prospects that lawmakers will act on measures to spur economic growth.

"The market is pricing in less gridlock in Washington," said Alex Li, head of rates strategy at Credit Agricole. "The market seems to be suggesting that the administration and congressional leaders are more open now to get something done in terms of the legislative agenda," including addressing the nation's tax system.

But conservatives were fuming over the deal, with one senior Republican aide saying that the deal undercut GOP leaders and bolstered the power of Democrats in Congress.

Asked about the compromise, Freedom Caucus member Ted Yoho of Florida said sarcastically, "It's great to be in the majority."

'Deal is Bad'

"The Pelosi-Schumer-Trump deal is bad," Republican Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska said in a statement.

Trump himself might have agreed, at least back in 2013 when he was still considering a run for the White House. He wrote on Twitter then, "The worst negotiators in history (otherwise known as Republicans) have just offered to suspend debt ceiling for four months. Pathetic!"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to put the best face on the deal while noting that Trump cut it with Democratic leaders.

"The president can speak for himself," McConnell told reporters. "But his feeling was that we needed to come together, to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis."

Congress is rushing to pass Hurricane Harvey relief funds by the end of the week because the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster-relief fund is set to run out of money Friday as a more powerful storm, Hurricane Irma, bears down on Florida.

The House voted 419-3 on Wednesday to pass \$7.85 billion to provide relief to tens of thousands of homeowners from flooding caused by Harvey in Texas and other parts of the Gulf Coast. The measure includes \$7.4 billion in FEMA disaster funds and \$450 million for the Small Business Administration. Additional FEMA funding is to be provided later, according to House aides.

Shortly after the vote, Trump and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with Republican and Democratic congressional leaders at the White House. McConnell, Ryan and Mnuchin pushed for adding a debt-limit extension of as long as 18 months to the Harvey bill, according to several people with knowledge of the discussion. A three-month debt-limit deal was the last thing Mnuchin wanted, an administration official said.

But Trump said he wanted a deal, and he accepted the Democrats' offer of a three-month debt-limit measure, one person said. At that point, McConnell stepped in to say a short-term government spending bill should also be added.

Several leaders of conservative groups said they blamed Republican leaders, not Trump, for the deal to add the debt-limit and spending measures to the House bill. They said McConnell and Ryan hadn't been able to push forward a conservative plan to raise the debt limit in a measure that cut spending.

"This is going to be very bad for our common goal of fundamental tax reform," Adam Brandon, president of the conservative FreedomWorks group, told reporters in a conference call. "This deal is straight out of the swamp."

'Taken Aback'

"I'm a little taken aback by it," said Representative Mark Walker, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the Republican Study Committee. "Usually you get a heads up" on a major policy decision.

Asked if this deal undercuts Republican leadership's ability to negotiate with Democrats, Walker replied, "It does."

Walker said he will present a letter to Ryan on Thursday with a list of policy suggestions that would get more Republicans to support a debt limit deal. It will contain 19 specific suggestions, he said.

Republicans appeared resigned to the notion that the combined measure would likely pass both chambers of Congress, carried by Democratic votes. But a number of Republicans said they would vote against it.

The attempt to tie the Harvey aid passed in the House to the debt limit "is a poison pill & a disservice to those who are suffering," Representative Richard Hudson of North Carolina tweeted. He said the Senate should pass the House measure without adding more provisions.

FAA and Flood Insurance

The deal still left out a few key priorities that Congress will have to address by the end of the month. Lawmakers still need to pass an authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration so that it can keep operating after Sept. 30. They also have to pass a renewal of the nation's flood insurance program, a high priority in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma.

Democrats, for their part, luxuriated in the unexpected win.

"Today was a good day in a generally very partisan town," Schumer told reporters. "And let's hope we can continue to work together for the good of Americans, for the good of the working families who so much need our help."

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/president-trump-unlikely-to-nominate-gary-cohn-to-become-fed-chairman-1504731461>

President Trump Unlikely to Nominate Gary Cohn to Become Fed Chairman

By Michael C. Bender, Harriet Torrey, and Nick Timiraos, 9/6/17

President Donald Trump is unlikely to nominate Gary Cohn, his top economic adviser, as the next Federal Reserve chairman, according to people familiar with the president's thinking, adding to the uncertainty over the U.S. central bank's leadership and policies next year.

Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal in July that he was considering Mr. Cohn as a potential successor to Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, whose term as central bank chief expires in early February.

The change in thinking comes at a time of great uncertainty over the top ranks of the world's most important central bank. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said Wednesday he will resign in mid-October for personal reasons, adding another vacancy to the three others on the powerful seven-member Fed board of governors. His departure accelerates Mr. Trump's opportunity to put his stamp on the central bank.

Candidate Trump was critical of the central bank and Ms. Yellen last year, publicly chiding her during the campaign for keeping interest rates too low, which Mr. Trump said benefited Democrats.

The shift in Mr. Cohn's prospects for the top Fed job arises largely from his criticism of Mr. Trump's response to the violence in Charlottesville, Va., the people familiar with the matter said.

The president said in the Journal interview that he was also considering whether to nominate Ms. Yellen for a second term. Mr. Trump has told people that he is impressed with Ms. Yellen, leaving them with the sense he might ask her to serve another term.

The change in Mr. Cohn's chances potentially bolsters her odds. Other names that have been discussed by Mr. Trump and his team as possible nominees to top Fed posts include former governors Lawrence Lindsey and Kevin Warsh, former BB&T Bank chief executive John Allison, and Stanford University economist John Taylor, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The White House has been considering nominating Marvin Goodfriend, a former research director at the Richmond Fed who is a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, to the Fed's board, the people familiar said. One possibility would be to nominate an incoming board member, such as Mr. Goodfriend, or a current board member, such as Fed governor Jerome Powell, to the vice-chair post.

Mr. Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, has been running the White House search for Fed chief. A senior administration official said “the president is considering several candidates.” Mr. Cohn’s office directed questions to the White House.

White House spokeswoman Natalie Strom said Mr. Cohn is “focused on his responsibilities...including a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver meaningful tax reform that creates jobs and grows the economy.” Mr. Cohn may have doomed his chances for the top Fed job with comments he made to the Financial Times last month, according to people close to the president.

The former investment banker had told associates that he was disgusted by Mr. Trump’s performance immediately after the president’s combative news conference on Aug. 15 about the Charlottesville events, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Cohn stood near Mr. Trump at the news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower, which White House officials had intended to focus on the president’s push for investment in infrastructure.

Asked if he considered resigning after the news conference, Mr. Cohn told the Financial Times that he was “reluctant to leave my post.” He also said the Trump administration “can and must do better” to condemn hate groups. “Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the KKK,” Mr. Cohn told the newspaper.

Mr. Trump wasn’t aware such a blunt critique was coming, said one person familiar with the president’s thinking. One White House official said the president visibly bristles at the mention of his economic adviser.

Mr. Trump had been eager to talk about the possibility of appointing Mr. Cohn as the next Fed chairman when he spoke about it during the Journal interview. At the time, the president said he had “gained great respect for Gary” during their time together in the West Wing.

A White House official said that Mr. Cohn, a former Goldman Sachs executive, may be able to repair his relationship with the president.

Mr. Cohn is one of the key White House hands shepherding an overhaul of the federal tax code through Congress. If successful, Mr. Cohn may find himself in better standing, the person said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump has nominated Randal Quarles, a private-equity executive who served in the Bush administrations, for one opening on the Fed board, but has yet to name his other picks.

A Senate committee is set to vote on Mr. Quarles’ nomination as the Fed’s vice chair for bank regulation on Thursday, and he is expected to ultimately win confirmation. Nominations for all board positions, including the chair and vice chair, are subject to Senate confirmation.

Mr. Fischer’s departure gives the White House a wider range of options in considering how to remake the Fed, but it also adds to the challenge Mr. Trump faces in managing the leadership turnover without roiling markets.

Mr. Fischer’s term as Fed vice chairman was due to end in June 2018, although his term as governor wouldn’t have ended until Jan. 31, 2020. Several people who know him say he has been addressing family health issues. Mr. Fischer is planning to attend the central bank’s next policy gathering Sept. 19 and Sept. 20, when the Fed is expected to announce plans to begin shrinking its portfolio of bonds and other assets accumulated during the financial crisis.

Fed officials in June raised their benchmark federal-funds rate to a range between 1% and 1.25% and penciled in one more rate increase this year. Analysts saw Mr. Fischer as a centrist voice as the Fed’s second-in-command, and slightly less inclined to keep rates low to spur the economy than Ms. Yellen.

However, other policy decisions beyond December are clouded by the leadership succession question, and that uncertainty could increasingly weigh on markets.

Every president since Ronald Reagan has asked the standing Fed leader to stay in the job at the start of his presidency, which has served to underscore the central bank's relative independence from politics on monetary policy. If Mr. Trump doesn't follow that pattern, Ms. Yellen would be just the third Fed leader since 1934 to serve only one term.

Ms. Yellen hasn't said whether she would like to serve a second term, but some friends and former colleagues say her long record of public service and her devotion to the Fed are clues that she would accept a nomination if it were offered.

Nearly three in four economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal this month said Ms. Yellen should be reappointed as Fed chair. Around two thirds of the same economists said Mr. Cohn is qualified to be chair. The Journal surveyed 56 economists from Sept. 1 to Sept. 5 in its monthly poll.

TRUMP TWEETS

N/A

To: Joe Pounder[jpounder@definerscorp.com]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 10:27:22 PM
Subject: Re: Definers -- Clips

Great. Adding Nancy and Liz.

On Sep 28, 2017, at 4:11 PM, Joe Pounder <jpounder@definerscorp.com> wrote:

We're fully registered...
<Screen Shot 2017-09-28 at 4.23.59 PM.png>

On Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 3:29 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers -- Clips

HI –

Working with contracts on this – here is the remaining issue that the contracting officer brought to me yesterday --

Specifically, the vendor is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). In order for any vendor to receive a contract from the federal government, they must be registered in this system. The vendor seems to be reluctant to register.

George had been working with the vendor on this. I have a call into the vendor as they

may need assistance in completing the forms.

Will update you as soon as I hear from the vendor.

Thanks ng

Nancy Grantham

Office of Public Affairs

US Environmental Protection Agency

202-564-6879 (desk)

202-253-7056 (mobile)

From: Wilcox, Jahan

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:02 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>

Subject: Definers -- Clips

Importance: High

Where are we on this and when can we get this going? Today is a day where we could really use their help capturing clips in real time. This is very important and our wait and the process to do this has been way too long. Thank you!

Jahan Wilcox

EPA

Strategic Communications Advisor

Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)

Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

--

Joe Pounder

jpounder@definercorp.com

571-290-5460

To: Alexander Nazaryan[a.nazaryan@newsweek.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/1/2017 4:22:41 PM
Subject: Re:

I can check and circle back on Monday. Honestly we are full through mid-January (mostly because of the holidays).

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 1, 2017, at 10:16 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Fine, but how about an interview with him? I know you think I am writing a hit piece, but I am not. I wouldn't need an interview for that. I wouldn't have spoken to people in Oklahoma who say he is the best person they've ever worked for.

On Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 8:13 AM Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

One more response you can use about your office ?

"Rather than getting in the weeds about process, Administrator Pruitt is meeting with top career staff at the lead inundated East Chicago Superfund site, Gold King Mine, San Jacinto Waste Pits and other polluted sites because this EPA is about achieving results." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 17, 2017, at 10:15 AM, Alexander Nazaryan <a.nazaryan@newsweek.com> wrote:

Enjoyed the Administrator's interview with the Washington Post. Could we set something similar up for Newsweek?

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 3:28 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

We sent you an on-the-record statement in October and we will send you this on-the-record statement as well.

On-The-Record Statement ... "Administrator Pruitt has met with staff from every region and took the unprecedented step of meeting with EPA's criminal investigators – a department that Obama slashed by 24 percent – about how we can work together

to protect the environment and American jobs.” – EPA
spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

On-The-Record Statement ... “We have a great working relationship with career EPA employees. In their own words, Mr. Cox said was planning his retirement before the new administration and Ms. Southerland said she was retiring due to a family issue. Despite the faux outrage, both employees will receive their six-figure taxpayer funded pension and we wish them the best.” – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ...

According to career EPA employee Joel Scheraga, he has a great working relationship with EPA employees. “Staff from the EPA’s disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO. An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt. ‘Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation,’ said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency’s senior adviser for climate adaptation. ‘Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues.’ ... Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities “invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don’t overflow so that they don’t spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams,” for example. ‘We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs,’ Scheraga said. ‘They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA’s mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water.’ (Politico Pro, 09/11/17)

Michael Cox said his retirement was planned before Administrator Pruitt was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. “Cox said his own retirement had been long planned even

before Trump's election, and that he's not aware of any big exodus of EPA staff from the Seattle office." ([Seattle Times](#), 04/12/17)

In an email to an EPA colleague, Betsy Southland said she retired because she found out that she needed to help out with family medical care. "Maybe you did not receive my email about my retirement, but I sent it to you in June as soon as I found out I needed to retire to help out with family medical care." ([NTK Network](#), Email Obtained By FOIA, 07/26/17)

Have a good day Alexander and we look forward to reading your story.

Best,

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: [202.309.0934](tel:202.309.0934)
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Alexander Nazaryan [<mailto:a.nazaryan@newsweek.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 9:08 PM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject:

Hi Jahan, I just want to make sure my requests are being taken seriously.
That wasn't the impression I got when we spoke today.

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

--

Alexander Nazaryan

Senior Writer
Newsweek

www.newsweek.com/authors/alex-nazaryan

--

Alexander Nazaryan
Senior Writer, National Affairs
Newsweek

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: White House Press Office
Sent: Wed 10/25/2017 2:22:27 AM
Subject: DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 24, 2017

**DAILY GUIDANCE AND PRESS SCHEDULE FOR
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2017**

In the afternoon, President Donald J. Trump will depart the White House for Joint Base Andrews, en route to Dallas, TX. After the President arrives in Dallas, TX, he will receive a briefing on hurricane recovery efforts. The President will then participate in a roundtable with Republican National Committee (RNC) supporters. In the evening, the President will give remarks at a Dallas Trump victory reception. The President will then depart Dallas, TX for Washington D.C., en route to the White House.

In-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: NBC

Print: Daily Caller

Radio: FOX

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

Wires: AP, Reuters, Bloomberg

Wire Photos: AP, Reuters, AFP, NYT

TV Corr & Crew: NBC

Print: McClatchy

Radio: Washington Post

EDT

9:00AM In-Town Travel Pool Call Time

11:15AM Out-of-Town Travel Pool Call Time

Joint Base Andrews

Virginia Gate

12:45PM THE PRESIDENT departs the White House en route to Joint Base Andrews

South Lawn

Open Press

1:05PM THE PRESIDENT departs Washington, D.C. en route to Dallas, TX

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

CDT

3:10PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in Dallas, TX

Dallas Love Field Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

**3:30PM THE PRESIDENT participates in a briefing on Hurricane
Recovery Efforts**

Signature Flight Support

Out-of-Town Travel Pool Spray

4:30PM **THE PRESIDENT** participates in a roundtable with RNC supporters

Belo Mansion

Closed Press

5:20PM **THE PRESIDENT** gives remarks at a Dallas Trump Victory Reception

Closed Press

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

6:25PM **THE PRESIDENT** departs Dallas TX, en route to Washington, D.C.

Dallas Love Field Airport

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

EDT

-

10:00PM THE PRESIDENT arrives in Washington, D.C.

Joint Base Andrews

Out-of-Town Travel Pool

10:20PM THE PRESIDENT arrives at the White House

South Lawn

Open Press

###

[Unsubscribe](#)

The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW · Washington DC 20500 · 202-456-1111

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Friedman, Lisa
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:43:50 PM
Subject: Re: well, then on a different subject...

Thanks so much. Is Washington Post accurate that EPA cancelled it? Joe's statement sort of indicates it was a mutual decision.

On Tue, Dec 19, 2017 at 12:41 PM, Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov> wrote:

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Friedman, Lisa [<mailto:lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: well, then on a different subject...

Got a comment about Definers dropping out of the contract?

--

Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

--

Lisa Friedman
Reporter, New York Times
(202) 862-0306 office

(202) 251-2083 cell

To: Greaves, Holly[greaves.holly@epa.gov]
Cc: Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 2/9/2018 6:08:53 PM
Subject: APPROVAL: Holly,

I'm just going to say this:

Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

"No, this is not accurate." EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox

From: Fimrite, Peter [mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com]
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2018 12:58 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Are your comments below off the record or can I quote you on any of them? You have them in quotes with your name attached. I would like to quote a couple of those answers. Also, I'm hearing that Region 9 will be facing a 10 percent personnel reduction by the end of fiscal year 2018, according to goals laid out by the EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Can you confirm this for me?

I definitely would like to tell about the actions of Congress rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals. Can you give me some idea about what the budget passed last night means for the EPA in terms of cuts?

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2018 6:26 AM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Peter –

Off-the-record, in regards to budget proposals would just remind you that this morning the Senate passed a two-year budget that will fund the government. Rather than leaving the tea leaves of proposals, believe your readers would like to know the action that Congress has taken, which includes passing a budget that again funds the entire government for the next two years.

- **Today, Friday, February 9, 2018, Congress Passed A Budget That Will Fund The Government For The Next Two Years.** “After a temporary lapse in government funding that lasted through the night, Congress passed a pricey two-year spending deal early Friday that will also fund the government for an additional six weeks. The government temporarily closed after Congress failed to pass a government funding bill before a midnight deadline due to the objections of one senator, shutting down non-essential government services. In the end, a bipartisan cohort of lawmakers supported the \$400 billion agreement. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. ET, the Senate voted, 71-28, to approve a two-year spending bill that would reopen the government, and the House passed it at 5:30 a.m. with the support of 240 members. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he had signed the bill, officially ending the brief shutdown.” ([NBC News](#), 02/09/18)

Additionally, **below are some on-the-record responses** to your questions. Some of these answers took a while to find and we hope that you will be able to use as much as possible.

Jahan

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Thanks for getting back to me. Here are some questions and issues I'd like to have addressed:

The folks I've talked to say morale is as low as it has ever been at Region 9 and that many long time employees have been taking early retirement, buyouts or quitting as a result, mostly, in response to what they say is a de-emphasis on science and environmental protection, the core work of the EPA.

- **“From Administrator Pruitt’s focus on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites, his leadership during the government shutdown that kept the agency open and paid every employee, to EPA’s Region 9 where just 11 employees took an early retirement and nearly a quarter of the employees are working despite being eligible to retire, morale is great at EPA.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Three former employees and another current one say the office is short staffed, that Superfund sites have been prioritized, with some now on the back burner, and that the words “climate change” were scrubbed from contracts and grants, a form of censorship.

- **“Administrator Pruitt has placed a renewed focused on cleaning up toxic Superfund sites. We are reviewing every grant and 99.84 percent of all grants have been awarded.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Another complaint is that industry and business metrics have been brought in to change the culture of the office and downsize and streamline environmental regulation.

- **“Administrator Pruitt is proud to streamline regulations, which is creating regulatory certainty.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many have told me off the record that they are scared to say anything and generally speak with each other in winks and whispers or out of the office because they fear being exposed by the consulting firm Definers Public Affairs, which they say has spent the past year investigating agency employees critical of the Trump administration and Pruitt. Is this true?

- **“No this is not accurate. Like any government agency, all EPA employees are subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and in terms of the FOIAs nearly all are aimed at political, not career employees.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Many are also critical of the fact that the two people considered for the administrator job both worked in the oil, gas or mining industry. Can you confirm that Ryan Flynn and Chris Paul were considered for the position. How is the search for a new administrator going and what are you looking for in the leader?

- **“We don’t discuss who have been or not been interviewed for the Region 9 Administrator or any other position. The Administration is carefully considering many highly qualified candidates for Region 9 and will announce another great regional administrator soon.”** – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

From: Wilcox, Jahan [<mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Call me or send me specific examples and I will do my best to address them.

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 3:20 PM
To: Fimrite, Peter <PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Questions about EPA morale

Will handle.

From: Fimrite, Peter [<mailto:PFimrite@sfchronicle.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Questions about EPA morale

I'm working on a story about all the changes occurring at the EPA and the effect it has had on employees in the various regions, particularly region 9. I was hoping for a comment from the administration or a spokesman. Please call me at 415-777-8454.

Peter Fimrite

Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle

Work: 415-777-8454

Cell: 415-298-2197

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: @pfimrite

To: Emily Holden[eholden@politico.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 5:44:46 PM
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume our news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:43 PM
To: 'Emily Holden' <eholden@politico.com>; Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Definers contract?

“How we consume the news has changed, and we hope to find a vendor that can provide us with real-time news clips at a rate that is cheaper than our previous vendor.”

From: Emily Holden [<mailto:eholden@politico.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Subject: Definers contract?

Is it true EPA is ending the contract?

Emily Holden

Reporter, energy/climate

POLITICO

eholden@politico.com

Mobile and WhatsApp: +1 225 284 8303

@emilyhholden

To: Lyons, Troy[lyons.troy@epa.gov]; Bowman, Liz[Bowman.Liz@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Graham, Amy[graham.amy@epa.gov]; Ferguson, Lincoln[ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]; Palich, Christian[palich.christian@epa.gov]; Bennett, Tate[Bennett.Tate@epa.gov]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 12:36:22 PM
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:35 AM
To: 'Alex Guillen' <aguillen@politico.com>
Cc: Anthony Adragna <aadragna@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Cool. I will send over the full table in a clean email.

From: Alex Guillen [mailto:aguillen@politico.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:32 AM
To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>
Cc: Anthony Adragna <aadragna@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

Looping in Anthony, ME's author, but those numbers are good for me to have on hand for when this inevitably comes up later.

From: Wilcox, Jahan [mailto:wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 8:26 AM
To: Alex Guillen <aguillen@politico.com>
Subject: FW: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

So you include half the story (Carper's story) but not the other half (EPA's story) that we've received to 11 of the 20 letters and that 7 of the past 9 are under 30 days.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/democrat-tom-carper-wont-support-trumps-epa-nominee-because-he-says-scott-pruitt-is-a-bad-penpal/article/2625486>

From: POLITICO Pro Energy [<mailto:politicoemail@politico.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 5:45 AM

To: Wilcox, Jahan <wilcox.jahan@epa.gov>

Subject: Morning Energy: NRC, EPA nominees get their date in committee today — Tillerson's first post-Paris trip to Capitol Hill — State regulators pitch Federalism 2.0

By Anthony Adragna | 06/13/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén, Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon

NUCLEAR NOMS REACH CRITICAL: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is lining up this morning to hear from Trump's trio of Republican nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The toughest questions for NRC Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki and nominees Annie Caputo and David Wright are likely to be parochial in nature. Nuclear power is a fairly contentious issue in New York and California, so Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris may press the nominees on home state concerns. Sen. Ed Markey is also a regular needler of NRC officials. Top EPW Democrat Tom Carper told ME he met with Caputo and Wright Monday afternoon and said "at first blush, both appear to be well-qualified" for the NRC slots.

Svinicki's term expires June 30 — just under three weeks! — but the White House dragged its feet in sending the three nominations to the Senate and EPW leaders are now trying to make up

for lost time: The panel has already scheduled a Thursday morning vote on Svinicki's renomination and intends to move her ASAP. Meanwhile, Carper has said — and reiterated Monday — that he'd like to eventually package Caputo and Wright with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

Also, up for a turn in the hot seat is Trump's pick to serve as EPA enforcement chief, Susan Bodine. She'll likely get hammered on the White House's proposed budget cuts, which hit enforcement along with most other areas at a time when many states have scaled back their own policing of environmental crimes. Senators may bring up the Justice Department's new policy blocking so-called "third party settlements" that pay for environmental projects, though she can easily enough deflect that as a matter to raise with DOJ. Bodine is a getting a lot more bipartisan support than her soon-to-be-boss; EPA rounded up compliments Monday from Obama-era officials like John Cruden and Avi Garbow.

One other thing to watch: Carper's been frustrated by the lack of responses to his oversight requests from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's agency and told ME there would be a "robust conversation about it" at the hearing. Look for him to possibly push Bodine to commit to responding to information requests from both parties and request Chairman John Barrasso echo the comments of Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley that the administration's policy of only responding to Republican chairmen is " nonsense."

If you go: The hearing starts at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

ALSO FOR YOUR RADAR: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today at 10 a.m. and then heads to a Senate Appropriations subpanel at 2:30 p.m. to testify on the State Department's budget request. ME isn't a betting man, but expects the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will come up along with other international climate diplomacy questions. Tillerson, of course, favored remaining a part of the Paris pact and was notably absent from Trump's Rose Garden speech announcing the pull out.

WELCOME TO TUESDAY! I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Kansas is the state that has gone longest without a Democratic senator (none since the 1930s). For today let's flip it around: Which state has gone longest without a Republican senator? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to aadragna@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

HONEY I SHRUNK BEARS EARS? Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Monday trimming back the controversial Bears Ears National Monument, Pro's Esther Whieldon reports. But Zinke did appear to rule out fully doing away with it. "Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call. Zinke also suggested that Congress pass legislation to treat some of the land as national conservation or recreation areas and give tribes the ability to co-manage whatever remains of the monument. Any effort to reshape the boundaries of the monument are sure to face challenges from environmental advocates and tribal groups. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House on more than

two dozen prior monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

Many groups quickly slammed the decision: Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation. "No president of the modern era has ever attempted to significantly alter the boundaries of a national monument, and we believe executive branch actions to reverse or otherwise undermine a single monument would jeopardize the future of all monuments," Joel Webster, director of Western lands for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said in a statement. And Defenders of Wildlife's Jamie Rappaport Clark urged Zinke to "consider the full record" and warned "an attack on one monument is an attack on them all."

But Utah politicians raved: House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) backed the recommendations even though he pushed to fully rescind the monument. "I commend Secretary Zinke for actually listening to local voices on the issue and conducting a thoughtful and deliberative review to help inform the president's ultimate decision," he said in a statement. Gov. Gary Herbert called the interim report an "important first step toward re-establishing sound land management practices" in the area and urged Trump to "take this recommendation seriously." Esther has more on the reaction [here](#).

VA BENE? A subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni is seeking permission to drill from an already existing facility in Alaska state waters in the Beaufort Sea, Pro's Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. Eni has [proposed](#) to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

REIMAGINING FEDERALISM FOR 2017: State environmental regulators are rethinking how they can best deal with EPA to respond to national and global threats while responding to local concerns and keeping regulatory costs manageable. The Environmental Council of the States released an outline of its [Cooperative Federalism 2.0](#) approach between EPA — which "should continue to lead in setting and adopting national minimum standards to protect public health and the environment" — and the states who are responsible for much of the implementation of federal environmental laws. "State flexibility to determine the best way for its programs to achieve national minimum standards ... is a particularly important aspect of ensuring that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand with healthy and vibrant communities," ECOS writes.

While ECOS did not cite specific examples, it said states "should generally have the ability to set standards that are more stringent or that are broader in scope than federal standards." (The Trump administration is mulling whether to let California keep its Clean Air Act waiver for tough vehicle emissions rules.)

SHAKING THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON CHINA: The Council on Foreign Relations' Elizabeth Economy [argues](#) in POLITICO Magazine that China has undeservedly seized the mantle of a world climate change leader — at least so far. "Filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today," Economy writes. She argues true global leadership

requires nations subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community and President Xi Jinping has not shown this will happen on climate change for China.

RED ALERT: Government officials and energy sector leaders were scrambling Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that could map grid networks, sabotage safety equipment and paralyze power companies, Pro Cybersecurity's Eric Geller reports. The weapon, which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors, can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. It's worth noting the industry has plotted for such scenarios for years, the government has improved its ability to respond quickly to potential threats and there's no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks to date.

HOUSE PASSES BUNCH O'ENERGY BILLS: Lawmakers approved 10 energy infrastructure and energy efficiency measures in the House on Monday night. Among the highlights: The HYPE Act (H.R. 2274), which would allow FERC flexibility to extend deadlines on hydropower project permitting; H.R. 627, which helps schools learn about federal funding for energy efficiency projects; H.R. 338, which hopes to expand education and training opportunities for energy and manufacturing-related jobs; and H.R. 1109, which would amend the Federal Power Act to set \$10 million as the minimum threshold for mergers and acquisitions subject to FERC jurisdiction. All of those passed by voice vote.

ZINKE KICKS OFF NEW ENGLAND SWING: Zinke kicks off a four-day trip through New England today where he'll tour several national monuments and scope out additional agency lands and holdings. First up: Zinke speaks to the National Congress of American Indians at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and then drives over to New Hampshire to announce a major conservation grant.

GREEN GROUPS PUSH PERRIELLO IN VIRGINIA PRIMARY: 350 Action supporters from all 50 states made calls Monday urging voters to back former Rep. Tom Perriello over Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in today's Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary. Climate Hawks Vote, Bill McKibben and Friends of the Earth are among the environmental endorsements Perriello has racked up in the primary campaign. Former Republican National Committee chair Ed Gillespie is a heavy favorite in the Republican primary. Polls close at 7 p.m.

FORMER EPA EMPLOYEES HIT PROPOSED TRUMP CUTS: Ahead of Pruitt's Thursday testimony on his agency's budget request, the Environmental Protection Network released an analysis finding the administration's push to slash EPA's budget by nearly one-third would "severely affect almost every aspect of EPA's programs and operations" and hit younger employees especially hard. "Staff layoffs most likely will hit younger, more recently hired staff, decimating the next generation of environmental professionals and crippling EPA and state efforts for years to come," the report from the bipartisan group of former agency employees concludes.

Speaking of which, Rep. Dan Kildee holds a press conference at 11 a.m. this morning Sierra Club and the American Federation of Government Employees in opposition to proposed budget

cuts to the Great Lakes region and agency more broadly.

A \$3.4 BILLION (REQUIRED) SALE: General Electric must sell its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants DOJ's sign off on a merger with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). GE announced plans to do precisely that in a deal \$3.4 billion deal with Suez, a French water and energy company. The Trump administration filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department.

MAIL CALL! HANDS OFF OUR MONUMENTS: Hot on the heels of Zinke's Bears Ears interim report, California Democratic Sens. [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) released a [letter](#) urging Interior not to alter the boundaries of six existing national monument in their state. "We respectfully request that your Department not recommend to the President that California's national monuments be rolled back or otherwise reduced," they wrote.

GET THOSE E15 PITCHES IN: More than two dozen advanced biofuel producers and trade associations, led by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Advanced Biofuels Business Council, sent Barrasso and Carper a [letter](#) Monday urging support for the [Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act](#) (S. 517). That measure, which would allow year-round sales of the E15, is slated for a [hearing](#) in EPW on Wednesday.

ARPA-E GETS A HEALTH CHECK: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases a report at 11 a.m. today looking at how good DOE's ARPA-E program, which aims to support radical new energy technologies, has been over its first six years. ME readers likely remember the Trump administration has called for zeroing out the program's funding.

REPORT: MINIMAL OVERLAP BETWEEN SAGE GROUSE, ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is releasing a [new report](#) today finding 79 percent of areas with medium to high potential for energy development fall outside of the greater sage grouse's habitat. It comes as Interior [launched](#) a review of the sage grouse conservation plans already in place.

NEW CAMPAIGN PUSHES NATURAL GAS: The American Gas Association launched a new national campaign — entitled "Your Energy" — educating consumers about what it says are the positive benefits of natural gas and the role it plays in their lives. State-specific programming kicks off in Connecticut and Virginia first. New website [here](#) (with autoplay!).

AWARDS SEASON: The Edison Electric Institute's Board of Directors gave retiring Executive Vice President David Owens the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award, while the Institute for Electric Innovation awarded Pepco Holdings' Karen Lefkowitz with its Technology Leadership Award.

MOVER, SHAKER: Steptoe & Johnson has added Monique Watson as of counsel, working in the energy group. She previously spent 15 years at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where she focused on oil and natural gas pipeline issues (h/t POLITICO Influence).

QUICK HITS

- Big Oil could shift a fifth of spending to renewables by 2035, Wood Mac says. [Houston Chronicle](#).
- Democrats aim to block Atlantic energy surveys. [API](#).
- TransCanada asks for pause on review of ND oil pipeline. [Bismarck Tribune](#).
- Dakota Access Pipeline reprimanded by Iowa regulators for lack of liability insurance. [Des Moines Register](#).
- BP Violated Contract When It Blended Texas Crude-Monroe Energy. [Reuters](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

- 9:00 a.m. — "[The Methanol Policy Forum](#)," National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor
- 10:00 a.m. — Senate committee [hearing](#) on NRC and EPA nominations, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, 406 Dirksen
- 10:00 a.m. — "[Small Watershed Infrastructure: Continuing the Mission, Building upon Success](#)," House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, 1300 Longworth
- 11:00 a.m. — American Petroleum Institute holds briefing on E15 and the Renewable Fuel Standard, RSVP: fangs@api.org
- 11:00 a.m. — Rep. Dan Kildee holds press conference call with Sierra Club and AFGE on proposed EPA budget cuts, RSVP: mitchell.rivard@mail.house.gov
- 11:00 a.m. — The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine releases report on ARPA-E program, National Academies' Keck Center, 500 Fifth St. NW, Room 100

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/nrc-epa-nominees-get-their-date-in-committee-today-023270>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Grassley rips Trump administration for blowing off certain oversight requests [Back](#)

By Burgess Everett | 06/09/2017 11:25 AM EDT

The Trump administration's policy of ignoring the oversight requests of Democrats and rank-and-file members has earned it a powerful enemy: Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump, the veteran Iowa Republican senator urged Trump to reverse a policy instituted by the White House and the Department of Justice's Office of Legal

Counsel to answer oversight requests only from committee chairmen, all of whom are Republicans because of GOP control of Congress. Though Grassley said that the Obama administration did sometimes ignore him, he said the formalization of a policy of ignoring the minority party "doesn't drain the swamp, Mr. President. It floods the swamp."

"I respectfully request that the White House rescind this OLC opinion and any policy of ignoring oversight request from non-Chairmen. It harms not just the members who happen to be in the minority party at the moment, but also, members in the majority party who are not currently chairmen. It obstructs what ought to be the natural flow of information between agencies and the committees, which frustrates the constitutional function of legislating," Grassley wrote.

He was not near done. In the seven-page letter to the president, Grassley calls the administration's opinion "nonsense" and argues that the president is being "ill-served and ill-advised" by his staff.

"To so fundamentally misunderstand and misstate such a simple fact exposes its shocking lack of professionalism and objectivity. Indeed, OLC appears to have utterly failed to live up to its own standards," Grassley added.

The Justice Department declined to comment to Grassley's letter. The White House did not immediately respond.

Fearing the weaponization of oversight requests by Democrats amid a deepening investigation into the administration's ties to Russia, White House officials instructed government agencies not to respond to oversight requests from anyone other than chairmen last month. Also in May, OLC wrote a guidance memo that formally restricted the flow of information to Democrats.

"Individual members of Congress, including ranking minority members, do not have the authority to conduct oversight in the absence of a specific delegation by a full house, committee, or subcommittee," OLC wrote in the memo.

There have been some exceptions to this policy on subjects like national security and at the Treasury Department, according to Democratic and Republican Hill staffers. But Democrats released dozens of letters on Thursday that they said have gone substantively unanswered by the Trump administration.

Democrats are outraged at the moves by the Trump White House to squash their requests, which range from overtly partisan letters asking for information that would likely damage the president to parochial issues that will never grab headlines. And now, some Republicans are, too.

"Members of Congress simply do not treat executive branch officials with such contempt and they do not deserve such treatment in return," Grassley wrote. "Unlike virtually all executive branch officials, Members are elected to constitutional positions. Instead, the executive branch should work to cooperate in good faith with all congressional requests to the fullest extent possible."

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

Zinke recommends shrinking Bears Ears monument [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 04:07 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed shrinking the Bears Ears National Monument on Monday, trimming back the controversial Utah monument created by former President Barack Obama during his final days in office.

A preliminary review of the 1.4 million-acre monument that Zinke sent to the White House over the weekend shows his "belief that the monument needs to be right-sized," Zinke said in a statement.

Any move by President Donald Trump to alter the monument designed to protect thousands of sensitive archaeological sites will set off a legal fight with tribes and conservation groups that have complained the Native American ruins there were being damaged and would be threatened by oil and gas development in the area.

Zinke's [preliminary recommendations](#) to Trump show he did not plan to go as far as revoking Obama's monument designation — a move that has been sought by the state's congressional delegation.

"Rescinding the monument was an option, but looking at it, there are some antiquities within the monument that I think deserve to be protected," he said in a press call.

Trump has ordered Zinke to review 22 of the national monuments that were established in the past two decades to determine if they should be altered or revoked. The secretary has until Aug. 24 to send his final recommendations to the White House, and Zinke has extended the comment period on Bears Ears to July 10.

Zinke is also pressing Congress to look at the Bears Ears boundaries "to see whether the lands are more appropriately designated as national conservation areas or national recreation areas," he said. "There's certainly a high demand of recreation. There's certainly a demand for conservation in some parts, but we believe that those areas are better suited under congressionally mandated designations than they are a monument."

The secretary also asked Congress to grant tribes the ability to co-manage specific areas within Bears Ears, and for Congress to clarify how wilderness areas that overlap with monuments should be treated, an issue for Bears Ears and some other monuments under review.

A former congressman from Montana, Zinke cited his concern that the federal government

restricts activities on the land it designates as protected, saying that designating a monument the size of Bears Ears where "multiple-use management is hindered or prohibited is not the best use of the land and is not in accordance with the intention of the Antiquities Act."

President Barack Obama created the monument in southeast Utah in December, angering Republicans who accused the administration of federal overreach by ignoring locals who opposed the move and using the Antiquities Act to cut off commercial activity such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Prior legislative attempts by the Utah delegation to curb federal monuments in the state have failed. Utah Republicans Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz did manage last year to get their Utah Public Lands Initiative legislation through the Natural Resources Committee, which Bishop chairs, but it never received a floor vote.

If Trump ultimately decides to alter Bears Ears or the other monuments on the list, he is certain to face legal challenges from environmental groups. "An attack on one monument is an attack on all of them," said Jesse Prentice-Dunn, advocacy director at the Center for Western Priorities.

Past presidents have changed the size of monuments but none have revoked them entirely, and legal questions remain as to whether the law allows a president to fully undo their predecessor's actions.

Zinke last month traveled to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments and this week he will head to New England to visit the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, which is also under review.

Zinke has repeatedly talked about the need to balance conservation with commercial and recreational demands on public lands, and has already this year ended the moratorium on new coal leases and launched reviews on ways to open up more areas for oil and gas development.

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Greens pan Zinke's Bears Ears plan, Utah lawmakers offer praise [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/12/2017 05:02 PM EDT

Environmental and recreation groups slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendation that President Donald Trump should shrink the Bears Ears National Monument, warning they would fight the move in court.

Earthjustice and the Natural Resources Defense Council threatened to sue if Trump adopts the recommendation, and NRDC President Rhea Suh said Zinke's proposal "sends a chilling signal

about the Trump administration's intent to hand over irreplaceable American landscapes to mining and fossil fuel interests."

Zinke's preliminary report recommended Trump downsize the 1.4 million-acre Bears Ears monument and suggested Congress pass legislation that designates some portions as national recreation areas or national conservation areas.

But the Outdoor Industry Association noted that previous attempts to pass legislation on monuments in the last congress had fizzled. "We are worried that the legislative process would fail again, leaving these important areas unprotected," said Amy Roberts, OIA executive director.

Utah's Congressional delegation praised Zinke's call to reduce the size of the monument, even though the lawmakers had pushed to revoke the monument. Many of Zinke's recommendations are similar to a bill the delegation backed in the last Congress.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) in a tweeted video said Zinke's recommendation "reflects a balance of our shared priorities in protecting this land and the antiquities that are found on it, while still preserving local involvement and taking into consideration the needs of local communities." And Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said Zinke's report "recognizes that local input should matter."

WHAT'S NEXT: Zinke has until Aug. 24 to make his final report on all 22 monuments he is reviewing and the agency is accepting public comments on all of them through July 10.

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Eni submits plan to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/12/2017 05:54 PM EDT

BOEM is asking the public to weigh in on whether it should allow a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni to drill in Alaska's Beaufort Sea.

Eni's move coincides with the Trump administration's push to open up more federal waters for oil and gas development. The Interior Department is currently reviewing how much of federal offshore holdings should be open to drilling.

Eni would drill into federal waters from its already existing facility in Alaska state waters, according to the plan it submitted to BOEM. The company proposes to start drilling in December of this year and continue into 2019.

WHAT'S NEXT: BOEM is accepting comments through June 22 on the scope of its

environmental review and through July 3 on Eni's drilling plan itself. The agency will take 30 days to evaluate Eni's plan.

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Why China Is No Climate Leader [Back](#)

By Elizabeth Economy | 06/12/2017 04:57 PM EDT

When President Donald Trump yanked America's support for the Paris Climate Accords, pundits were quick to hail China as the world's new environmental leader. Two veteran journalists [wrote](#) that the decision was "the greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world."

But is leadership on climate change really a strategic gift? Do the Chinese want it? And above all, do they merit it? The quick answer is no, no and no.

True global leadership is costly: It requires vision, creativity, perseverance, deft diplomacy and often cold, hard cash. It also demands a willingness on the part of political leaders to align, and in some cases subordinate, their own narrow interests to those of the larger international community. The Chinese, including President Xi Jinping, understand this. That is why any number of Chinese analysts have been quick to reject the idea that Chinese leadership on climate change is realistic, [arguing](#) as one did, "Taking on global leadership is too much, too soon for China." Xi Jinping, himself, is somewhat less willing to reject the idea out of hand. China as a global power shaping norms and institutions is a central element of his rejuvenation narrative. He therefore flirts with the prospect, proclaiming China ready to [defend](#) globalization and to [protect](#) the Paris climate agreement. But nowhere does Xi say that China will actually lead; that is left to others.

So where does China stand on the climate leadership spectrum? First, the good. It will meet its Paris commitment: By 2030, China's CO2 emissions will peak and its energy intensity (the amount of energy consumed per unit of GDP) will be reduced by 60-65 percent. In addition, Beijing is making strides toward rebalancing its energy mix. This year it [cancelled](#) 85 new coal fired power plants on top of the 18 that it cancelled last year; if brought on line, these 103 new plants would have [exceeded](#) China's 2020 targets of 1100GW of coal-fired power capacity by 150 GW. (By way of comparison, total U.S. energy produced from coal is 350GW.) Moreover, China has pledged not to approve new coal-fired power plants in as many as 13 provinces and regions until 2018. (Of course, one might reasonably ask what is happening in the other 18 provinces and regions, and what 2018 might bring.) China has also stepped up its commitment to renewable energy. In 2016 China [invested](#) \$78.3 billion in renewable energy—topping both Europe (\$59.8 billion) and the United States (\$46.4 billion). China also [ranks](#) first in terms of total installed renewable electric capacity. Much of this capacity, however, remains idle. In 2016,

in three of the most wind power-rich provinces and regions—Gansu, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia—for example, levels of curtailment (capacity not utilized) reached 43 percent, 38 percent and 21 percent respectively. The curtailment rate for solar energy was similarly high. In contrast, curtailment rates in the United States and Europe are generally between 0-5 percent. In the wait and see category, China is reportedly set to launch a nationwide CO2 cap and trade system sometime this year. This system could be spectacular, or it could be spectacularly embarrassing.

Now the bad. China is still the largest emitter of CO2 on the planet by a substantial margin, contributing 29 percent of the world's total CO2 emissions in 2015. The United States comes in a distant second at 14 percent. In addition, while Beijing is cutting back on coal-fired power plants—particularly in its wealthy and pollution-conscious coastal provinces—it is upping its count of CO2 emitting coal-to-chemical (including coal-to-gas) plants. There are 46 coal-to-chemical plants in operation and another 22 under construction that will add another 193 million tons of carbon emissions annually. A conservative estimate suggests that by 2020, such plants will contribute as much CO2 as all of Poland's contribution to global carbon emissions, while the extreme scenario—if China builds all the coal-to-chemical plants outlined in its 13th Five Year Plan—will lead to a contribution of almost 800 million tons per year, more than German's total carbon emissions in 2015, and equal to roughly 10 percent of China's current CO2 contribution.

China also falls short in the eyes of some independent monitoring groups that assess countries' climate commitments. The 2017 annual report by German Watch and the Climate Action Network ranks China 48th—just a few places behind the United States at 43rd—in terms of how much it has done to avoid climate change and how much it plans to do. True climate leadership belongs to the Europeans—France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, in particular—although even these climate leaders come in for some criticism. Moreover, the Climate Action Tracker, produced by three international research institutions, indicates that China's current emission reduction targets are not consistent with ensuring that the earth's warming remains below 2 degrees C.

And finally the ugly. Whatever positive steps China is taking at home are not being replicated in its behavior abroad. China is the world's largest exporter of coal-fired power plant finance and technology. Even as Xi is calling for an "international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road" (his comprehensive new trade and development initiative involving 65 countries), Beijing is backing more than 100 new coal-fired power projects in the Belt and Road countries. China's much-touted Belt and Road deals in Pakistan, for example, include plans for as many as 12 coal-fired power plants—even in areas recognized for their superior solar energy potential. In addition, China is actively pushing coal-to-chemical plants abroad. The Paris accords don't account for countries' actions outside their own borders, so China is not breaking the letter of its Paris commitments, but these Belt and Road investments are certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the agreement.

Beyond the clear limitations of China's climate policies at home and abroad, there remains the larger question of diplomatic leadership. Will China rally other countries to adopt another round of more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets? Will it stop the overseas financing and sale of coal-fired power plants and coal-to-chemical plants? Will it push forward to limit other

harmful greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane? Will it accede to international monitoring and verification of its emissions, an important measure it continues to reject? Thus far, there is no indication that China has plans to adopt any of these leadership-worthy measures.

When Trump, in the midst of withdrawing the United States from the Paris agreement, offered up the possibility of renegotiating the climate pact, the rest of the world in effect said, "not going to happen." Undoubtedly other countries are becoming accustomed to the idea of a world without American leadership. But filling the void left by the United States must be earned, not simply granted by overeager officials and pundits. China may one day earn that right, but not today.

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Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon [leapt into the public eye](#) Monday morning via reports from security firms [Dragos](#) and [ESET](#). Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause

widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a little-noticed cyberattack on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 digital strike on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's cyber information sharing center on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An industry coordinating group known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy, according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to a

summary report. But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

Tim Starks contributed to this report.

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DOJ will require GE to sell refinery chemicals business before Baker Hughes merger [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/12/2017 03:52 PM EDT

The Justice Department today said it will require General Electric to sell off its Water & Process Technologies division if it wants the government's blessing to merge with oilfield services giant Baker Hughes.

GE in March announced [plans to sell that division](#) to Suez, a French water and energy company, for \$3.4 billion. Carrying out that sale will satisfy the DOJ.

GE and Baker Hughes together represent two of the four major providers of refinery chemicals and services, which are classified as "process technologies." Allowing GE and Baker Hughes to combine their refinery chemicals division would hurt competitiveness and drive up prices, the DOJ argued.

The DOJ filed a [lawsuit](#) to block the merger today, along with a [proposed settlement](#) that would resolve the antitrust concerns, according to the department. The proposal is subject to 60 days of public comment and court approval.

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Zinke orders review of sage grouse plans [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/07/2017 07:17 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed a secretarial order on Wednesday launching an internal review of the agency's sage grouse conservation plans across 11 Western states that aims to foster increased energy development.

The order, which will be released Thursday morning, directs the Bureau of Land Management,

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to identify parts in BLM's 98 land use management plans that should be tweaked or rescinded because of their effect on development or due to differences with each state's own plans.

The review will focus on principal threats to the sage grouse habitat, such as invasive grasses and wildland fire, and will consider options like captive breeding and setting population targets — something the governors of Wyoming and Colorado warned may not be the right approach. Zinke directed the team to report back within 60 days.

Some governors have complained that the current management plans set under the Obama administration hinder their ability to develop oil and gas resources and create hurdles for timber harvesting and recreation, Zinke said in a press call.

But former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told POLITICO on Wednesday the existing management plans were "designed to be very flexible and to allow the states and the federal land management agencies to work together" to support both sage grouse conservation and energy development.

However, she acknowledged the agency's 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse as endangered or threatened was not fully hashed out. "When you do something on this scope and scale, you haven't refined all the details yet," Jewell said. What matters is that "everybody understands that they need to protect critical habitat if that decision to not list the bird is going to stick."

The Western Energy Alliance, an oil and gas industry group, has challenged some of the existing plans in court and says the agency ignored the technological advances that reduce the impact of fossil fuel extraction on the sage grouse habitat, which spans all of the major producing basins in Wyoming, Utah, Montana and parts of Colorado.

Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma said Interior should defer more to states since they know where the sage grouse is most active, and she isn't worried that reworking the plans could take years.

"What risk is there?" Sgamma said. "Development is at practically a standstill already in sage grouse habitat."

Conservation groups contend Zinke's move will prioritize energy development over conservation.

"Zinke seems to believe that the highest and best use of America's public lands is for the development of dirty fossil fuels and so it's unsurprising that he's proposing to take a look at gutting protections for an imperiled species to benefit that industry," said Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice staff attorney who has represented conservation groups in legal battles over sage grouse plans in Wyoming and Utah.

Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said Zinke's idea to set population targets for states could actually increase the likelihood the FWS will later list the bird,

since the agency would have to revisit the decision if states fail to meet their targets.

"The very thing that some folks and industry are fearing, which is not being able to do anything, would almost definitely occur if they went on the path they're proposing," O'Mara said.

Nada Culver, senior counsel and director of The Wilderness Society's BLM Action Center, said the existing plans do not need to be scrapped but rather the agency can better clarify how fossil fuel and renewable energy projects can be developed in sage grouse habitat. "There's room in the plan to do that," she said.

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On Mar 12, 2018, at 8:45 AM, Block, Molly <block.molly@epa.gov> wrote:

EPA News Highlights 3.12.18

Wall Street Journal: Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics. This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

Politico Morning Energy: Let's Try This Again

The administration will attempt to resolve the current impasse over the Renewable Fuel Standard today, in a meeting with executives from both the biofuel and oil industries, sources tell Pro's Eric Wolff, excluding the elected officials who have been present at the last two gatherings Trump held on the subject. Instead, today's meeting will include Jeff Broin, CEO of POET, who will bring a plan intended to drive increased consumption of ethanol while lowering the cost of Renewable Identification Numbers for two years. Meanwhile, oil refiners will come armed with a report by Charles River Associates arguing in favor of a waiver system to cap the price of biofuel credits.

National News Highlights 2.12.18

ABC News: White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Politico: Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms. Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

CNBC: Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year. The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

TRUMP TWEETS

Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/doomsday-climate-scenarios-are-a-joke-1520800377>

Doomsday Climate Scenarios Are a Joke

By Oren Cass, 3/11/18

Debates over climate change are filled with dire estimates of its cost. This many trillions of dollars of damage, that large a share of gross domestic product destroyed, so-and-so many lives lost, etc. Where do such figures come from? Mostly from laughably bad economics.

This has nothing to do with the soundness of climate science. The games begin when economists get their hands on scientific projections and try to translate temperatures into human impacts. They conduct statistical analyses of the effects that small year-to-year temperature variations have on things like mortality and economic growth, and try to extrapolate to the effect of very large, slow shifts in underlying climate. This creates absurd estimates that ignore human society's capacity for adaptation. This is the latest iteration of the same mistake environmental catastrophists seem insistent on making in every generation.

The best illustration lies deep in a 2015 [paper](#) published in Nature by professors from Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. They found that warm countries tended to experience lower economic growth in abnormally warm years, while cold countries experienced higher growth in such years. Applying that relationship to a much warmer world of the future, they concluded that unmitigated climate change would likely reduce global GDP by more than 20% from what it otherwise would reach by century's end.

That is roughly an order of magnitude higher than prior estimates, and it has received widespread media attention. But it is as preposterous as it is stunning.

While the world economy stagnates, the model projects, cold countries will achieve almost unimaginable wealth. Iceland supposedly will achieve annual per capita income of \$1.5 million by 2100, more than double that of any other country except Finland (\$860,000). Mongolia, which currently ranks 118th in per capita income, is supposed to rise to seventh, at which point the average Mongolian will earn four times as much as the average American. Canada's economy becomes seven times as large as China's.

The technical term to describe this analysis is "silly." Obviously, the relationship posited between temperature and growth has little to do with reality.

Sadly, this paper represents the norm. Last fall the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [summary](#) of existing research on future climate costs for the United States. As I show in a new [report](#) published by the Manhattan Institute, a small set of studies dominate this research. They reach their imposing dollar figures by refusing, like the Nature study, to consider how society will evolve and adapt.

One Environmental Protection Agency study estimates the potential increase in extreme-

temperature deaths by looking at city-specific effects. It assumes that a day counting as unusually hot for some city in 2000 will cause a similar mortality increase in that city in 2100, even if climate change makes it no longer unusual.

The result is a projection that a hot day will kill massive numbers in Northern cities by 2100—though such temperatures are already routine at lower latitudes with no such ill effects. Pittsburgh’s extreme-temperature mortality rate is supposed to be 75 times as high in 2100 as that of Phoenix in 2000, though Pittsburgh will not be as hot then as Phoenix was a century earlier.

But if Pittsburgh’s climate steadily warms over the coming century, it will not react to a 100-degree day in 2100 the same way it did in 2000. Even if it didn’t warm, we should assume that economic and technological advancement will make the city and its residents more resilient to heat than they are today.

Another analysis relied on by GAO, taking its own approach to extreme-temperature deaths, inadvertently makes this point—then proceeds to ignore it. The “American Climate Prospectus” attempts to combine two different studies that consider whether very hot days—during which the average temperature is above 90 degrees—have higher mortality than days with moderate temperatures. The first of these studies used data from 1968–2002 and found that the answer was yes.

But a second study, published later by some of the same authors, looked at how this relationship had changed over time. Here they found that the mortality rate on hot days had declined precipitously. The adoption of air-conditioning, they concluded, “has positioned the United States to be well adapted to the high-temperature-related mortality impacts of climate change.”

Incredibly, even though overlapping authors had contributed to both of these studies, and one of them was also a reviewer of the “Prospectus” analysis, the “Prospectus” ignored the declining-mortality trend and claimed climate change would kill tens of thousands annually.

This question of adaptation, and how to account for a future different from the present, is not an esoteric detail for science and economics. It is fundamental to understanding the challenge posed by climate change.

If you imagine society is static and incapable of innovation, the prospect of climate change must be terrifying—all of humanity paralyzed like Michelle Pfeiffer in “What Lies Beneath,” watching the bathtub fill slowly with water.

But horror movies are not reality. The 1960s overpopulation scare made sense, assuming that society would not find more productive ways to farm. The 1970s fear of impending limits to growth made sense, assuming that society could not expand a finite supply of resources. Those doomsday predictions failed because the underlying assumption was mistaken. Society is constantly adapting to all sorts of changes. If a projection of climate-change cost ignores adaptation, we can safely ignore it.

Politico: Morning Energy

<https://www.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/03/zinke-and-perrys-very-busy-week-128220>

Let's Try This Again

By Kelsey Tamborrino, 3/12/18

The administration will attempt to resolve the current impasse over the Renewable Fuel Standard today, in a meeting with executives from both the biofuel and oil industries, sources tell Pro's Eric Wolff, excluding the elected officials who have been present at the last two gatherings Trump held on the subject. Instead, today's meeting will include Jeff Broin, CEO of POET, who will bring a plan intended to drive increased consumption of ethanol while lowering the cost of Renewable Identification Numbers for two years. Meanwhile, oil refiners will come armed with a report by Charles River Associates arguing in favor of a waiver system to cap the price of biofuel credits.

Corn makes some noise: Reps. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.), Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Kristi Noem (R-S.D.), and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa), the co-chairs of the Congressional Biofuels Caucus, sent Trump a letter Friday asking him to "reject any changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard that would hurt the farm economy." Ethanol supporters also held a rally in Nevada, Iowa this weekend aimed at sending a message to Trump to back the RFS.

ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/white-house-school-safety-proposal-focus-empowering-states/story?id=53673052>

White House Ready to Endorse Plan for Improving School Safety

By Jordyn Phelps, 3/12/18

President Donald Trump has called for bold action to improve school safety after last month's Parkland shooting, but a set of proposals the White House formally plans to

endorse on Monday leaves most authority for reform up to the states and for consideration by a new federal commission led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The only pieces of legislation Trump is set to endorse formally are two bills he's previously backed: The FIX NICS Bill, which calls for making improvements to the nation's background check system, and the STOP School Violence Act, which would provide grants to states in developing anti-school-violence plans. The White House has previously expressed support for both measures.

Additionally, the White House is calling for an audit and review of the FBI tip line, directing the Department of Justice to partner with willing states to train qualified school personnel and calling for a review of expanding mental-health programs and patient-privacy laws.

The White House is also calling on states to pass risk-protection orders that allow law enforcement to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily prevent those individuals from buying new firearms.

These proposals will be released with little fanfare on Monday, with no specific White House event planned around the occasion.

While Trump has previously suggested he supports universal background checks on all firearm purchases, a senior official explained that the president is supporting the narrow FIX NICS Bill for now is a matter of practicality.

"The president wants to improve our background check system -- we want to act now, we don't want to wait," a senior administration official said. "We believe that this legislation is important and useful in improving the background check system and can pass virtually immediately if there's not obstruction in Congress."

As for the potential for further action on background checks, the official said "that's something we'll discuss in the commission."

The president had also previously called for raising the minimum age on purchasing firearms to 21 across the board, something the NRA strongly opposes.

While the president has in recent weeks suggested other politicians have not pushed for changing the minimum age out of fear for the powerful gun lobby, Trump now is similarly backing down. The administration said that's a debate for states and the DeVos-led commission.

"Regarding the age, that's obviously a state-based discussion that's going on right now, and that's something that the commission will look at, get information from the states about what they're considering, and what's impactful and useful," a senior official said.

As for the president's call to arm school personnel, the only action the White House is

formally expected to endorse Monday is the Justice Department's working with states to help interested localities in arming and training qualified individuals, with no details yet provided on how such programs will be funded.

"The DOJ ... will provide assistance to states to help them partner with state and local law enforcement to provide appropriate firearms training, and other training with appropriate school personnel," a senior official said. "Those are capable of happening today."

Devos insisted on a call with reporters that the time for talk and no action is over.

"We've had to talk about this topic way too much over the years," she said. "And there's been a lot of talk in the past but very little action. I have to give credits to the students in their courage and consistent call for action."

But the commission she will chair is operating without a deadline, even as a senior administration official insists it will move with "deliberate speed" and "impatience" from its leader to offer real solutions.

Politico

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/12/pennsylvania-special-election-lamb-saccone-454728>

Republicans Wage 11th-Hour Blitz in Pa. Special Election

By Elena Schneider and Alex Isenstadt, 3/12/18

Republicans mounted a last-ditch stand here to save their struggling candidate for a House seat deep in the heart of Trump country, unleashing the party's full arsenal to stave off a major embarrassment for the president and GOP heading into the midterms.

Nearly every corner of the national party was involved in the final push over the weekend — from the Republican National Committee, which deployed staffers from Washington to knock on doors; to a cash-flush GOP super PAC that orchestrated an under-the-radar effort to diminish Democratic hopeful Conor Lamb's standing with liberal voters; to the powerful Koch political network, which is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a mail and field deployment campaign ahead of Tuesday's closely-watched special election.

And then there was President Donald Trump, who flew here on Saturday evening to campaign with Republican nominee Rick Saccone, an appearance the White House hopes will energize GOP voters who've yet to rally behind the underperforming candidate.

The multi-million-dollar undertaking underscored the enormous stakes for the party in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, which Trump won by 20 points but where polls show Lamb and Saccone locked in a tight race. A loss here would be an ominous sign for the party in the run-up to November, starkly illustrating its softening support even in Trump strongholds.

It would also raise questions about whether the themes the GOP has thrust to the forefront of the race — namely its tax cuts and opposition to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — are as potent as the party had hoped.

By the end of the weekend, Republicans had dropped more than \$8 million on TV ads, outspending Democrats nearly two-to-one, according to media buying figures. In an indication of just how much capital the administration is expending on the contest, Donald Trump Jr. is slated to campaign with Saccone on Monday, two days after his father staged a rally.

As the contest hurtled into its final days, Lamb, a square-jawed 33-year-old Marine veteran and former federal prosecutor who has appealed to voters in both parties, presented himself as a consummate underdog. Addressing a standing-room-only rally at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg on Sunday afternoon, Lamb said the grass roots support he'd received had allowed him to withstand the advertising barrage from Republican-aligned outside groups.

"They use these same tactics everywhere around the country, but I think when they came to western Pennsylvania, they weren't counting on what they were going to find here," he said.

At a rally with Lamb at the United Steelworkers headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh on Friday, Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, marveled at how much Republicans had spent on the race.

"The president comes in for his second visit, the vice president has been here, Ivanka's been here, cabinet secretaries have been here, 10 kitchen sinks has been thrown here, \$15 million has been spent here, and that Marine is still standing," Doyle exclaimed.

Yet there's evidence the Republican offensive might be having some effect. A data analysis completed by the RNC during the middle of last week showed Lamb leading just 48 percent to 47 percent, according to two people briefed on the numbers. The Democrat's advantage had shrunk from four percentage points in the committee's previous analysis of the race days earlier.

Saccone, a 60-year-old state legislator and retired Air Force officer, was optimistic that momentum was "swinging our way."

"It's a special election, so it's all about turnout," Saccone said at the Allegheny County Republican Party headquarters on Friday, when he was asked why the race was so close.

“Our people get out, we win, and there’s no problem.”

But Saccone vented frustration at the media for its coverage of the race, saying it had given Lamb flattering coverage while largely ignoring his accomplishments.

“The media fawns over my opponent, trying to stretch his little thin resume and trying to make it sound like it’s something big, when I have a big resume that they to try and scrunch down and don’t say anything about,” he said.

Senior Republicans have called Saccone a lackluster candidate who has heavily leaned on the national party to run his campaign. Trump himself has been down on Saccone in private; at the rally, the president tried to gin up some excitement for him.

Trump described Saccone as a “really good person,” told his supporters to “go out on Tuesday and vote like crazy,” and highlighted his decision to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Party officials hope the tariffs announcement will win over labor workers in the union-heavy district.

At the same time, Republicans are trying to dampen Lamb’s support among liberals, whom he needs to show up in big numbers in order to win. Congressional Leadership Fund, a House GOP-aligned outside group, sent mailers to liberal households in the district outlining Lamb’s pro-gun credentials and his support for the Second Amendment.

“Thank you Conor Lamb for opposing gun restrictions,” say the mailers.

The super PAC has also sent advertisements to Democratic voters saying that Lamb had opposed a \$15 minimum wage and that he “abandoned PA labor unions,” who were “outraged” by him.

Lamb was concerned enough about the GOP maneuver that late last week he launched a TV ad to explain his views on guns. The commercial said Lamb “supports strengthening background checks to keep guns from criminals and people in need of mental health treatment.”

As they funneled into Trump’s rally on Saturday, some of the president’s supporters conceded they were worried. They said Lamb had waged a surprisingly energetic campaign for such a conservative seat.

“I’ve seen a lot more Conor Lamb signs in my neighborhood,” said Tracy Barzan, a 45-year-old stay-at-home mom whose 13-year-old son, Gavin, wore a Trump hat signed by Mike Pence.

“A lot of people I’ve heard from who are voting for Conor Lamb are doing so because of his age, him being younger, and looking at it that he has fresh ideas,” she added.

A loss on Tuesday would be a painful blow for Republicans, given the pro-Trump tilt of the

district and the importance the president has placed on Pennsylvania. The state was a keystone of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition, and he has visited a handful of times since his inauguration.

Before his visit on Saturday, some of the president's loyalists questioned whether Trump should skip the campaign event, worried that he'd take even more blame if Saccone loses. But others argued the president had little to lose.

"If Rick Saccone somehow loses on Tuesday, regardless of whether the president made the trip on Saturday or not, the media will blame the president," said David Urban, who oversaw Trump's 2016 campaign in the state. "It reminds me of, 'Heads I lose, tails you win.'"

CNBC

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/11/elon-musk-says-mars-spaceship-will-be-ready-for-short-trips-by-first-half-of-2019.html>

Elon Musk, Speaking at SXSW, Projects Mars Spaceship Will Be Ready for Short Trips By First Half of 2019

By Michelle Castillo, 3/11/18

Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk told an audience at South by Southwest that his timeline for sending a space vehicle to Mars could mark its first milestone early next year.

The privately-funded venture, announced in September 2017, aims to send a cargo mission to the Red Planet by 2022. SpaceX's ultimate objective is to plant the seeds to put a human colony on Mars.

Musk held a surprise question and answer session at the annual technology and culture festival in Austin, Texas on Sunday. The billionaire told attendees that "we are building the first Mars, or interplanetary ship, and I think we'll be able to do short trips, flights by first half of next year."

Mindful of elevating expectations too high, Musk hedged a bit. "Although sometimes, my timelines are a little, you know..." he said to laughter.

SpaceX's BFR rocket system is expected to have capabilities for interplanetary travel, and be fully reusable. A flight will cost less than the initial Falcon 1 flights, which Musk pegged in the \$5 to \$6 million range.

He hopes if BFR launches, others will believe Mars travel is possible, and follow suit.

"The biggest thing that would be helpful is just general support and encouragement and goodwill," Musk said. "I think once we build it we'll have a point of proof something that other companies and countries can go and do. They certainly don't think it's possible, but if we do they'll up their game."

In the immediate term, Mars will need Glass domes, a power station, and an assortment of basic living fundamentals, he cautioned. After the infrastructure is complete, "then really the explosion of entrepreneurial opportunity [will begin], because Mars will need everything from iron foundries to pizza joints," he said.

In a wide-ranging series of remarks, Musk regaled the audience with anecdotes about several of his other ventures, including Tesla and the Boring Company, with the billionaire joking he tweets about the latter more than he actually spends time working on it.

He also raised eyebrows when asked the source of his inspiration, citing iconic entertainer Fred Astaire and irascible hip-hop artist Kanye West.

TRUMP TWEETS

<image001.png>

<EPA News Highlights 3.12.18.docx>

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Anna Palmer Jake Sherman Daniel Lippman
Sent: Fri 2/2/2018 6:26:42 PM
Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by the Alliance for American Manufacturing: NUNES MEMO DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED -- TRUMP on memo contents: 'I think it is a disgrace' -- JOB GROWTH accelerates in January, but black unemployment spikes

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by the Alliance for American Manufacturing

By JAKE SHERMAN (sherman@politico.com; [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)), ANNA PALMER (anna@politico.com; [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)), DANIEL LIPPMAN (daniel@politico.com; [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman)) and ZACH MONTELLARO (zmontellaro@politico.com; [@ZachMontellaro](https://twitter.com/ZachMontellaro))

THE NUNES MEMO IS RELEASED -- THE MAJOR CLAIMS OF THE MEMO: "The 'dossier' compiled by Christopher Steele ... on behalf of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Hillary Clinton campaign formed an essential part of the Carter Page FISA application. ... Neither the initial application in October 2016, nor any of the renewals, disclosure or reference the role of the DNC, Clinton campaign, or any party/campaign in funding Steele's efforts, even though the political origins of the Steele dossier were then known to senior DOJ and FBI officials. ...

"Before and after Steele was terminated as a source, he maintained contact with DOJ via then-Associate Deputy Attorney General Bruce Ohr, a senior DOJ official who worked closely with Deputy Attorneys General Yates and later Rosenstein. ... Steele admitted to Ohr his feelings against then-candidate Trump when Steele said he 'was desperate that Donald Trump not get elected and was passionate about him not being president.' This clear evidence of Steele's bias was recorded by Ohr at the time and subsequently in official FBI files -- but not reflected in any of the Page FISA applications.

"According to the head of the FBI's counterintelligence division, Assistant Director Bill Priestap, corroboration of the Steele dossier was in its 'infancy' at the time of the initial Page FISA application. ... While the FISA application relied on Steele's past record of credible reporting on other unrelated matters, it ignored or concealed his anti-Trump financial and ideological motivations.

"The Page FISA application also mentions information regarding fellow Trump campaign advisor George Papadopoulos, but there is no evidence of any cooperation or conspiracy between Page and Papadopoulos ... The Papadopoulos information triggered the opening of an FBI counterintelligence investigation in late July 2016 by FBI agent Pete Strzok. ... Strzok was reassigned [from the special counsel's team] ... for improper text messages with his mistress, FBI Attorney Lisa Page ... where they both demonstrated a clear bias against Trump and in favor of Clinton, whom Strzok had also investigated. The Strzok/Lisa Page texts also reflect extensive discussions about the investigation, orchestrating leaks to the media, and include a meeting with Deputy

Director McCabe to discuss an 'insurance policy' against President Trump's election."
The full memo <http://politi.co/2GIWchk>

TRUMP IN THE OVAL OFFICE: "The memo was sent to Congress, it was declassified. Congress will do whatever they're going to do. But I think it is a disgrace, what's happening in our country ... A lot of people should be ashamed of themselves and much worse than that." ... **When asked if he is more likely to fire Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein:** "You figure that one out."

-- **NOTE:** This is exactly the opposite way that GOP congressional leaders have tried to frame the release of the memo. They have repeatedly described the issue as a matter of transparency, not as an opportunity to discredit the FBI, DOJ or other governmental institutions.

WHAT'S NEXT? SPEAKER PAUL RYAN has said he wants Democratic memo to be released.

NOT MENTIONED IN THE MEMO -- Fusion GPS was originally hired by The Washington Free Beacon, a conservative website. **NYT's October 2017 report on the funding** <http://nyti.ms/2GHFeQc>

-- **@juliaioffe:** "Some things the Nunes Memo does not explain away: 1) The hack of DNC servers by 2 Russian intelligence agencies 2) George Papadopoulos's contacts with the Russians 3) Michael Flynn's negotiations with the Russian ambassador 4) the Trump Tower meeting 5) Firing Comey" ... **@DavidAFrench:** "Here's potentially the most important paragraph [on George Papadopoulos] in the memo. It appears to confirm the NYT's scoop -- which was that the counterintelligence investigation began BEFORE the FISA applications against Page. Papadopoulos was already under investigation." **The December 2017 NYT story on Papadopoulos**
<http://nyti.ms/2s53FUm>

BUT ABOUT THOSE TEXTS... -- "Inside the FBI Life of Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, as Told in Their Text Messages," by WSJ's Del Quentin Wilber: "Texts critical of Mr. Trump represent a fraction of the roughly 7,000 messages, which stretch across 384 pages and show no evidence of a conspiracy against Mr. Trump. Rather, a broader look shows an unvarnished and complex picture of the lives of an FBI agent and lawyer who found themselves at the center of highly charged probes."

"They logged long hours and frequently worked on weekends. They seemed dedicated to their jobs but didn't hesitate to chastise or criticize many others beyond Mr. Trump, including their colleagues and each other. In deeply personal office chatter, they come across as intense, ambitious and unsure of their standing in the bureau."
<http://on.wsj.com/2GDOdC9>

REACTION FROM WASHINGTON -- HOUSE INTEL CHAIR DEVIN NUNES: "The Committee has discovered serious violations of the public trust, and the American

people have a right to know when officials in crucial institutions are abusing their authority for political purposes." **Full statement** <http://bit.ly/2GFUn4D>

-- **SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.):** "The latest attacks on the FBI and Department of Justice serve no American interests -- no party's, no president's, only Putin's ... If we continue to undermine our own rule of law, we are doing Putin's job for him." **More from Elana Schor** <http://politi.co/2s6vIDg>

-- **HOUSE INTEL RANKING MEMBER ADAM SCHIFF**, before the official release of the memo: "The country's top elected leader has agreed to selectively and misleadingly release classified info to attack the FBI -- that's what would have been unthinkable a short time ago."

THE AUTHOR -- "The 'Nunes Memo' Ripping the Justice Department Was Written by Former Justice Department Lawyer," by The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff: "House intelligence committee chairman Rep. Devin Nunes has been the face of a memo expected to be released today that is fracturing relations between federal law enforcement and the president. But a little-known committee staffer whose last job was in the Justice Department put the explosive document together.

"Kash Patel, according to sources familiar with the memo, read the highly classified intelligence it's based on (something the Justice Department indicates Nunes has not done), drafted the memo, and then dealt with FBI and Justice Department efforts to keep it from being released to the public." <http://thebea.st/2rZRcBF>

Good Friday afternoon. Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow this morning, so we're due for six more weeks of winter -- at least theoretically.

HEADLINES THE PRESIDENT WILL LIKE -- "Job growth accelerates in January," by Ian Kullgren: "Job growth accelerated in January, the government reported Friday, giving President Donald Trump a boost following his State of the Union Address. The Labor Department reported that the economy added 200,000 new jobs, up from 160,000 in December. The unemployment rate was unchanged for the fourth consecutive month at 4.1 percent.

"The numbers also lend credence to Trump's claim during his address Tuesday that wages are beginning to rise under his leadership after months of stagnation with the economy nearing full employment. Wages in January rose to 2.9 percent over the previous year, compared to 2.7 percent in December, the largest year-over-year wage increase since June, 2009." <http://politi.co/2rXLZKq>

-- **@morningmoneyben:** "Live by volatile monthly stats, die by volatile monthly stats. African-American unemployment spikes to 7.7% and Trump's talking point is dead."

***** **A message from the Alliance for American Manufacturing:** Will President Trump keep his promise to America's steelworkers? Steel is our nation's strength. But

with steel imports surging and layoffs at steel mills, time is running out. See why the Section 232 steel action matters for American jobs and security. Learn more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLUXhGWM7x4> *****

THE LATEST ON RUSSIA -- "Legal fund in development to help Trump administration and campaign staff pay legal bills in Russia probe," by ABC News' John Santucci and Matthew Mosk: "Lawyers are laying the groundwork for a new legal defense fund to aid those who have at one point served candidate and now President Donald Trump and who have been pulled into the ongoing Russia probe.

"The fund, called the 'Patriot Legal Expense Fund,' is being looked to as a way to provide financial support for any legal bills incurred by any individual who 'was an employee, consultant, fundraised or volunteer' on behalf of President Trump's campaign, according to a document labeled 'draft' that was posted on the Office of Government Ethics website. The document, written by lawyers from Wiley Rein LLP, is dated Jan. 29, 2018, but it is unclear who started the fund or how much in assets the funds currently hold." <http://abcn.ws/2GHGDpR>

WAR REPORT -- "Mattis warns Syria not to use chemical weapons again," by Wesley Morgan: "The Syrian regime should think carefully before using the chemical weapons again, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned Friday, in an apparent reference to last year's U.S. military strike on a regime airfield in retaliation for a previous chemical attack. 'You've all seen how we reacted to that,' Mattis said, adding that the Syrian regime 'would be ill-advised' to launch more chemical attacks, as some reports from inside the country in recent days have suggested." <http://politi.co/2GFwcmR>

PAGING MITCH MCCONNELL -- "Bryant not interested in Cochran seat despite urging from Trump, McConnell," by the Clarion-Ledger's Geoff Pender and Sam Hall: "Gov. Phil Bryant is not interested in going to the U.S. Senate, despite urging from President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Washington Post reported Thursday night that McConnell met with Bryant this week and asked the governor to appoint himself in the event that Sen. Thad Cochran stepped down in the coming months.

"Sources close to Bryant told the Clarion Ledger after the Post report was published that Bryant is not interested in such a scenario. The sources did confirm the conversation with McConnell and also said the president had talked to Bryant about the same thing. The same sources said Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves would be the leading candidate if Cochran steps down. Reeves is expected to run for governor next year." <http://on.thec-l.com/2s2qxUB> ... *The WaPo story from Michael Scherer, Sean Sullivan and Josh Dawsey* <http://wapo.st/2s0CWbT>

-- OTHER COCHRAN REPLACEMENTS: Rep. Gregg Harper, Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves, Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, are all among the most discussed by Mississippi Republicans. Chris McDaniel, a state senator who lost to Cochran in a bitter 2014 primary, is also on the short list.

PRESIDENT TRUMP has called both Japanese Prime Minister **SHINZO ABE** and South Korean President **MOON JAE-IN** to discuss North Korea today, according to readouts from the White House. He also talked about defense-related issues with Abe and the Olympics and trade with Moon.

AFTERNOON READ -- "Trump's controversial new health care idea: His surprise mention of an experimental-drug law this week was a huge win for libertarians pushing against the FDA. But will it help patients?" by Sarah Karlin-Smith: "It sounds like a humane and overdue change to federal drug regulations: Allow desperately sick patients to ask for experimental new medicines if they're willing to take the risk. And give drugmakers a break on liability if they provide them to patients. ...

"To supporters, the idea is a welcome last chance for suffering patients, a shot at trying risky medical innovations that just might save their lives. Behind the law, however, lies something beyond the patient-in-need stories that their advocates like to trot out. At both the state and federal level, right-to-try laws are part of a sustained campaign to roll back the power of the Food and Drug Administration more broadly, loosening more than half-a-decade's worth of drug regulation, largely driven by one Arizona free-market think tank. ...

"Nationally, in the 38 states to have passed right-to-try, [the Phoenix-based Goldwater Institute] can point to only a single doctor who has treated patients with a drug because of the law. Despite those failures, both advocates and opponents think a national law could change the landscape. Advocates believe it will force drugmakers' hands, creating the publicity and momentum necessary to get drugs to more dying patients. And a law at the national level could eliminate the risks that drugmakers now face for violating interstate commerce laws if they provide drugs for federally unapproved uses. Opponents say it would establish a dangerous precedent -- a national beachhead for a new set of ideas that could, someday, weaken a federal drug-safety system responsible for decades of American medical and business success."
<http://politi.co/2GFm5yp>

HARASSMENT FILES -- "Steve Wynn Calls on Employees to Rally Behind Him During Company Meetings," by WSJ's Chris Kirkham, Elizabeth Bernstein and Rebecca Ballhaus: "In a series of meetings with his Las Vegas casino personnel in recent days, casino mogul Steve Wynn urged employees to rally to his side following sexual-misconduct allegations against him, according to audio recordings of the meetings made by participants.

"Mr. Wynn, the chairman and chief executive of Wynn Resorts Ltd., didn't directly address the allegations against him, according to the recordings reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. Instead, he stressed that he considers his employees a 'family.' In difficult financial times in the past, he said, 'we were a family. It wasn't every man for himself. And that family culture has made us great.'" <http://on.wsj.com/2GEI35E>

-- **"Victims' father charges at ex-U.S.A. Gymnastics doctor in court,"** by Reuters' Joseph Ax and Jonathan Allen. <http://reut.rs/2s1gsHx> ... Video from NBC News <http://bit.ly/2rX0pKI>

THE PARTY CHIEF -- "RNC's McDaniel, candid but discreet, leading party of Trump," by the AP's Thomas Beaumont: "[RNC chairwoman Ronna] McDaniel has proved a shrewd navigator of the president's swirling currents, but not a sycophant. She has kept Trump's confidence in a way other top advisers haven't, certainly by posting a robust financial bottom line for the party, but also by being candid with him in private and discreet when she's disagreed. ...

"McDaniel now readies for her biggest test as chairwoman: protecting congressional majorities in the November elections while facing political headwinds fanned by the president's low approval ratings and -- more immediately -- fallout from her finance chief's departure. 'My job is to be truthful,' she said. 'My job is to share with him my recommendation.' She added: 'We may have a dialogue about it. We may disagree. But ultimately I'm going to support the president.'" <http://bit.ly/2GFkJUr>

NEW GIG -- "Yellen to start Monday at Brookings Institution, following Bernanke," by CNBC's Steve Liesman: "Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen will begin work Monday morning as a distinguished fellow at the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., CNBC has learned. In heading to Brookings, Yellen follows in the steps of former Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and former vice chairman Donald Kohn, along with former top Fed staffer Nellie Liang." <http://cnb.cx/2GihDz5>

TV TONIGHT -- Bob Costa is joined by TIME's **Molly Ball**, WaPo's **Michael Scherer**, NYT's **Carl Hulse** and POLITICO's **Rachael Bade** on "Washington Week" tonight at 8 p.m. on PBS.

SPOTTED: Ted Olson lunching with Brendan Sullivan in the porch room of the Palm yesterday ... Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) on a delayed American shuttle to New York out of DCA ... Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell waiting for an American flight to Louisville at DCA ... Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) in cowboy boots this morning on a Southwest flight from D.C. to Kansas City.

SPOTTED last night at a cocktail party hosted by Google at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in honor of Black History Month and a brand new 3D exhibit: Wade Henderson, Dr. Lonnie Bunch, Kevin Turpin, Darlene Superville, Vint Cerf, Mistique Cano, Becca Rutkoff.

TRANSITIONS -- Chrissy Harbin will start at the Department of Energy as senior adviser for external affairs on Monday. She was previously VP of external affairs at Americans for Prosperity.

ENGAGED -- Morgan Granger, a talent acquisition partner at Politico and an Advisory

Board alum, recently got engaged to **Dan Connolly**, an accounting manager at Sands Capital Management and a Deloitte alum. "We met in D.C. 3 years ago at Front Page in Dupont Circle. Nothing too romantic, just connected over happy hour red wines at the bar. ... We got engaged while in London on the London Eye." *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2GIDVAK>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Mark Skidmore, senior adviser at Bully Pulpit Interactive, and **Marissa Ain**, founder and CEO of Plate + Decanter, email friends and family: "Marissa and I would like to introduce you to our son Jasper Joseph Skidmore! He was born at 3:49 a.m. ... He weighed in at a healthy 7lbs 4.8oz. Mom was a boss, Dad didn't faint and the kid is doing great. ... A special shout out to our Uber driver Ibraheem who made it to the hospital in 16 mins and was a very calming influence on the way up." *Pics* <http://bit.ly/2GGQ60D> ... <http://bit.ly/2GCNf9f> ... <http://bit.ly/2Exo2fE>

--**Esme Grant Grewal**, VP of government relations at the American Network of Community Options and Resources: and **Chan Grewal**, attorney adviser at the SEC and a FINRA and DOJ alum, recently welcomed their second boy. "First generation Washingtonian Rex Grant Grewal is doing great and big brother Jax is happy he is finally here!" *Pic* <http://bit.ly/2nBeyYR>

***** **A message from the Alliance for American Manufacturing:** Steel is America's strength, but the industry faces a wave of imports from countries like Korea, China, Russia, Turkey, and Brazil. These steel imports threaten tens of thousands of jobs and our national security. Only one American company now makes the type of steel needed for the electric grid, and only one supplies the steel used to make Virginia-class submarines. President Trump repeatedly has promised to stand up for American-made steel - and it's time for him to keep that promise. See why the Section 232 steel action matters for American jobs and security. Learn more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLUXhGWM7x4> *****

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Subject: POLITICO Playbook, presented by CTIA: THE BACKSTORY: Trump to Alabama to help Strange, sets up TRUMP v. Bannon -- TRUMP calls Kim Jong-un 'rocket man' -- SUNDAY BEST -- FEINSTEIN: Russia probe might take another year and a half -- B'DAY: David Litt

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Playbookers

Good Sunday morning. TRUMP TO ALABAMA -- ALEX ISENSTADT GETS THE BACKSTORY -- "Trump takes on Bannon in Alabama Senate showdown: If Luther Strange loses, many Republicans fear it would trigger a wave of primary challenges against GOP incumbents next year": "President Donald Trump's decision Saturday to intervene in the Alabama special election followed weeks of pleas from senior Republicans who fear that a loss will invite a wave of primary challenges against GOP incumbents and damage the party in the 2018 midterms.

"The national party had mounted a full-court press ahead of the Sept. 26 election to persuade the president to make a late visit to the state, where controversial former judge Roy Moore has opened a significant lead over incumbent Sen. Luther Strange. Trump remains popular in Alabama even as his support has diminished elsewhere. ...

"Trump's unexpected move sets the stage for a showdown between the president and his recently departed chief strategist, Steve Bannon, who is all-in for Moore. Bannon has cast the Alabama race as an-important clash between grass-roots conservatives and the Washington establishment - and a test for whether other incumbent senators can be successfully challenged by insurgents in 2018."

<http://politi.co/2hafSi3>

-- WAPO'S MICHAEL SCHERER and MATEA GOLD: "It's shaping up to be McConnell, the Senate Leadership Fund and the Chamber against Bannon,' said Scott Reed, the senior political strategist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. 'And we will take that fight.' ... Reed echoed the criticism of Bannon for breaking with Trump. 'He is turning into a rallying point for the alt-right, which is kind of bizarre because half of what he does is damage his former client and friend, whom he served as chief strategist for,'

Reed said." <http://wapo.st/2x773j8>

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS -- at 7:40 a.m.: "Attorney General Bill Schuette will be a fantastic Governor for the great State of Michigan. I am bringing back your jobs and Bill will help" ... **at 7:53 a.m.:** "I spoke with President Moon of South Korea last night. Asked him how Rocket Man is doing. Long gas lines forming in North Korea. Too bad!" ... **at 9 a.m.:** "Important meetings and calls scheduled for today. Military and economy are getting stronger by the day, and our enemies know it. #MAGA".

-- **TRUMP** goes to New York tonight.

CLIMATE WATCH -- "Trump Administration Seeks to Avoid Withdrawal From Paris Climate Accord, International Climate Officials Say: White House spokeswoman says 'no change' in U.S. position on deal," by WSJ's Emre Peker: "Trump administration officials said Saturday the U.S. wouldn't pull out of the Paris Agreement, offering to re-engage in the international deal to fight climate change, according to multiple officials at a global warming summit. The U.S. position on reviewing the terms of its participation in the landmark accord came during a meeting of more than 30 ministers led by Canada, China and the European Union in Montreal. ... U.S. officials in Montreal, led by White House senior adviser Everett Eissenstat, broached revising U.S. climate-change goals, two participants said, signaling a compromise that would keep the U.S. at the table even if it meant weakening the international effort.

"Still, the move would maintain international unity behind the painstakingly negotiated Paris accord, after Mr. Trump suggested he might seek a new agreement. ... In a statement Saturday afternoon, a White House spokeswoman said the administration's position on Paris had not changed, but also noted that the president's stance on withdrawing from the deal had never been set in stone. 'There has been no change in the U.S.'s position on the Paris agreement,' said deputy press secretary Lindsay Walters. 'As the president has made abundantly clear, the U.S. is withdrawing unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favorable to our country.'"

<http://on.wsj.com/2frk9h4>

THE LATEST ON THE LONDON ATTACK -- "UK police arrest 2nd man in London subway attack case," by AP's Gregory Katz in London: "Police said Sunday that a 21-year-old man was arrested late Saturday night in Hounslow in west London and is being held under the Terrorism Act. He is being questioned at a south London police station but has not been charged or identified. Two men are now in custody for possible roles in the bombing attack on a rush-hour subway train Friday morning that injured 29 people in London. An 18-year-old man was arrested Saturday in the departure area of the port of Dover, where ferries leave for France." <http://bit.ly/2xHnpzL>

--**AP BULLETINS -- at 10:07 a.m.:** "LONDON (AP) - British officials lower the country's terrorist threat level from 'critical' to 'severe.'" ... **at 9:27 a.m.:** "PARIS (AP) - Prosecutor: 4 female US tourists attacked with acid in Marseille's main train station; woman arrested."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH: "Protests turn violent in Delmar Loop late Saturday; second night of post-verdict strife": "For the second consecutive night, peaceful daytime protests descended into late-night violence with broken windows and thrown rocks, water bottles and garbage can lids following Friday's acquittal of a white former police officer in the shooting death of a black suspect." <http://bit.ly/2h7cbNQ>

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** The global race to deploy 5G wireless is on-and America needs to win. Government action on spectrum and infrastructure policy will allow U.S. wireless companies to invest \$275 billion, create more than 3 million jobs, and add \$500 billion to the economy, according to Accenture. Learn more at CTIA.org. *****

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- THIS WEEK IN TURTLE BAY ...

-- **ON FOX NEWS SUNDAY, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR H.R. McMaster** said the three themes Trump will hit on in his maiden speech at the U.N. are protecting American people, promoting American prosperity and promoting accountability and sovereignty.

-- **"Tillerson heads to U.N. gathering with Haley waiting in the wings,"** by Annie Karni: "The disagreement among Trump administration officials and Washington's foreign policy intelligentsia is not about if but rather when U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley eclipsed Secretary of State Rex Tillerson as America's top diplomat. As President Donald Trump heads to New York for his first United Nations General Assembly, the weeklong gathering is being viewed as the most public test yet for the shrunken diplomat at Foggy Bottom - an opportunity for Tillerson to reassert himself by the president's side as something more than a bean-counter, or risk being overshadowed by Haley on the most high-profile stage to date.

"It would be unprecedented for a U.N. ambassador to upstage a secretary of state at the diplomatic Super Bowl. UNGA is typically a frenetic week of parties, speeches, bilateral meetings and Manhattan traffic jams, during which the ambassador cedes the yearlong spotlight she enjoys at U.N. headquarters to officials higher up the food chain. But 'unprecedented' is the Trump administration's unofficial slogan. And Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, is seen as one of its most ambitious players, competing for prominence against a former Exxon Mobil CEO, who has been criticized for accepting the lead role at the State Department only to oversee a dramatic shrinkage of its budget and influence." <http://politi.co/2fskIY0>

-- **"Trump Admin Doesn't Expect Israeli-Palestinian Peace Breakthrough During U.N. General Assembly,"** by Haaretz's Amir Tibon and Barak Ravid: "The Trump administration does not expect any kind of breakthrough regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process during the United Nations General Assembly this week despite their overall optimism, a senior White House official told Haaretz on Sunday. U.S. President Donald Trump will meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the diplomatic gathering, but the senior official noted that 'this week is not about the peace effort.' ...

"The official noted that Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, recently returned from a visit to the region together with senior advisers Jason Greenblatt and Dina Powell. The official called the visit 'very productive' and said that 'those peace conversations are continuing at a steady pace and will be mostly separate from the United Nations meetings.'" <http://bit.ly/2xJcy8g>

REMEMBER HIM? -- ERIC CANTOR in the **NYT: "How to End the Immigration Wars"**: "Only Congress can fix this mess. It should do so by providing a path for law-abiding Dreamers to obtain a green card and ultimately, full citizenship.

"In exchange for a much improved program for Dreamers , Congress should significantly increase America's border security by funding additional personnel, technology and physical resources at our border. While President Trump's "wall" has gotten all the political attention, much of the border can be secured more quickly and efficiently by other means. In addition, Congress should require the institution of a comprehensive biometric entry-exit system to prevent visa overstays." <http://nyti.ms/2xIVjUM>

-- **THIS IS MILES** from where the debate is at this moment.

CARL HULSE speaks to **SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY.)** on the NYT's "The New Washington" podcast: **ON STEVE BANNON DECLARING WAR ON THE ESTABLISHMENT**: "I don't have any reaction to it." <http://nyti.ms/2wyFIHO>

BLAST FROM THE PAST -- "Sources: Michael Grimm to run for old seat in Congress," by NY1 News: "NY1 has learned that former New York congressman Michael Grimm will run for his old seat, less than 16 months after he was released from federal prison. Sources said Grimm will hold a rally Oct. 1 in New Dorp, where he is expected to announce his candidacy for next year's Republican primary against current Rep. Dan Donovan, who represents Staten Island and parts of south Brooklyn.

"A federal tax fraud conviction appeared to end Michael Grimm's political career nearly three years ago, after he admitted to paying several workers off-the books at a Manhattan restaurant that he owned. But after he resigned his seat and served seven months in prison, Grimm began taking steps back toward the political arena. He created a new Twitter account, posting opinions and politician-style photos." <http://bit.ly/2y6O314>

#CONCORDIA17: POLITICO is the official media partner of the 2017 Concordia Annual Summit taking place in conjunction with the UN General Assembly in NYC tomorrow and Tuesday. Join us in the Big Apple as we host conversations with world leaders, industry experts, current and former heads of states, C-suite executives, and senior

congressional and administration officials. **Register here:** <http://bit.ly/2wETVIt>

Playbook Reads

REAL HEADLINE -- FRONT PAGE OF THE DETROIT FREE PRESS -- "Kid Rock, Eminem, ICP carve own paths in politics" <http://bit.ly/2yhyuUZ>

--A PLAYBOOKER EMAILS: At Little Caesars Arena last night in Detroit, Kid Rock, who was the kickoff artist for the opening of the arena, was introduced as "the next senator of the great state of Michigan" as a Kid Rock '18 for U.S. Senate image appeared on the stage's video screen.

A POLITICAL LAYUP -- FRONT PAGE OF THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD -- "Sen. Joni Ernst takes new swing at taxpayer-subsidized perks of former presidents" <http://bit.ly/2yil8rl>

WHAT MITT ROMNEY'S READING -- "Orrin Hatch, 83, says another campaign hinges on his health: 'I'm older but you know, nothing stops me,'" by Salt Lake Tribune's Tommy Burr: "Hatch, who describes himself as 'a tough old bird' at 83, acknowledges that his age has affected him -- though he says it hasn't slowed him down, and a medical report provided by his office says he's physically fit. The Utah Republican is the third oldest member of the Senate, and his office frequently jokes on social media about the senator's age, quipping that he's been around since the Civil War or the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. ... As the longest-serving Republican senator, Hatch is the Senate president pro tempore and third in line for the presidency -- a position that earns him a round-the-clock security detail.

"Hatch says he wakes up around 5 a.m., works out on a stationary bike and does some stretching exercises. ... Hatch acknowledges his eyes have been bugging him of late - they're frequently red and staffers print his remarks in large type to make sure he can read them - and he wears a hearing aid in his right ear. When he speaks, he's often hard to hear, a point the senator attributes to his job. ... Hatch's schedule on that day his office arranged for The Tribune to spend with him ran 27 items long, starting at 6:25 a.m. and wrapping up at 7 p.m. He was almost constantly on the move, from hearings to meetings to calls." <http://bit.ly/2wnwUUw>

SUNDAY BEST -- GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS speaks with **BRITISH PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY** on **ABC'S "THIS WEEK": STEPHANOPOULOS:** "You're coming to the United States this week. You're speaking to the United Nations. You're relatively unknown to most Americans. What's the most important thing you want them to know about what you're trying to achieve?" **MAY:** "Well, what I'm -- there are two things. One is this issue of ensuring that we can stop terrorists from plotting online, plotting on the internet, and that we can stop the spread of the hateful extremist ideology, which can inspire terrorism. I think that's really important for us. And another

issue I'm going to be talking about is something that most people probably don't think about, don't think happens. It's what I call modern slavery, which is when people are being effectively taken into servitude, into slavery, for sexual exploitation or labor exploitation. It's happening under our noses."

-- **ON TRUMP: STEPHANOPOULOS:** "You've also got the travel ban. His comments after Charlottesville. Pulling out of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Big differences." **MAY:** "Well, I think the point about the special relationship between the U.K. and the U.S. is that when we do disagree we're able to say so. And -- pretty bluntly. And I'm -- for example, on the Paris issue that you talk about, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, I've made very clear I was dismayed when America decided to pull out of that. And I -- as I've said to President Trump, I hope that they'll be able-- able to find a way for America to come back into the agreement."

STEPHANOPOULOS: "Do you still think he'll be able to come here for a state visit or is that just not gonna happen?" **MAY:** "No, Her Majesty the Queen-- issued the invitation. The president has accepted it. It's just a question of getting dates to -- and sorting out the logistics." **STEPHANOPOULOS:** "So it has nothing to do with the opposition here in the United Kingdom?" **MAY:** "No, this is -- this is about finding dates when -- the invitation was issued and the invitation has been accepted."

DANA BASH speaks to **U.N. AMBASSADOR NIKKI HALEY** on **CNN'S "STATE OF THE UNION":** **BASH:** "Well I think General Mattis will take care of it. You're talking about the Pentagon and you're talking about a military option. Is that what 'fire and fury' meant?" **HALEY:** "You have to ask the President what fire and fury meant. But I think we all know that basically if North Korea keeps on with this reckless behavior, if the United States has to defend itself or defend its allies in any way, North Korea will be destroyed. And we all know that. And none of us want that. None of us want war. But we also have to look at the fact that you are dealing with someone who is being reckless, irresponsible and is continuing to give threats not only to the United States, but to all of their allies. So something is going to have to be done. We're trying every other possibility that we have but there's a whole lot of military options on the table."

-- **DANA** also spoke to **SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN:** **BASH:** "Do you have any idea when that's going to happen, that public testimony from Donald Trump Jr.?" **FEINSTEIN:** "Well, it will be this fall. I know that for sure. Things keep changing, not by design, but by just the press of other business on the committee. And I think people have to anticipate -- I know because, as I walk through the halls, there's a rush of press, you know, with question after question. It may take a long time. This could take a year, a year-and-a-half, if not more."

H.R. MCMASTER to **CHRIS WALLACE** on **"FOX NEWS SUNDAY"** on **NORTH KOREA:** "It really depends on how we see this threat continue to manifest itself and our judgment about how much time we have. We are out of road because in the past the approach taken to the problem of North Korea and the Kim regime over decades has been to enter into long drawn-out negotiations that then deliver an unsatisfactory

agreement. An agreement that, then, the North Korean regime breaks. And with that agreement does though that's particularly dangerous oftentimes - what has all the time in the past - is lock in the status quo as the new normal. And this regime is so close now to threatening the United States and others with a nuclear weapon, that we really have to move with a great deal of urgency on sanctions, on diplomacy and on preparing if necessary a military option."

ATTN. NANCY PELOSI AND CHUCK SCHUMER -- CHUCK TODD spoke with **SEN. TOM COTTON (R-ARK.)** on **"MEET THE PRESS"** : "[I]f you pass the so-called Dream Act it'll be the single biggest amnesty in the history of the United States. Even bigger than the 1986 amnesty which Ronald Reagan said was his biggest mistake in office."

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** Tomorrow's 5G networks will create 3 million jobs, add \$500 billion to the economy, and fuel innovation and entrepreneurialism across every sector. If policymakers move quickly to release more spectrum and modernize infrastructure rules, the wireless industry stands ready to invest \$275 billion to build these next-gen networks, according to Accenture. This will drive breakthrough advancements in remote health care, connected vehicles, energy, education and beyond-making our lives better and safer. But the race to deploy 5G wireless networks is underway-and we're at a critical moment. The EU, China, Japan, South Korea and others are doing everything they can to win. If policymakers act now, the U.S. can continue our global leadership in wireless. Learn how at CTIA.org. *****

THE OPPOSITION -- "California tears into Trump," by California Playbooker David Siders in Sacramento: "Ripping into Donald Trump in the final hours of this year's legislative session, California lawmakers passed measures urging Congress to censure the president, bucking his immigration policies and seeking to force him to release his tax returns. They also formally called on Trump 'to publicly apologize to all Americans for his racist and bigoted behavior.' If there was any question about the location of the nerve center of the anti-Trump resistance, it was settled with a defiant fusillade of legislation Friday and Saturday memorializing California's antipathy toward the president.

"The end-of-session rush of bills served as a reminder of the limitations of the president's recent diplomacy with Democrats in Washington - and of an unrelenting effort to keep pressure on the president from afar. 'The issue of resistance is beyond the symbolism,' Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León said after the session officially closed. 'There's real lives at stake ... and I think that a lot of other municipalities, as well as other states, are looking towards California ... to be the leader of this resistance.'" <http://politi.co/2wyH7s7>

BONUS GREAT WEEKEND READS, curated by Daniel Lippman:

--**"How Condé Nast Put the Squeeze on New Yorker Cartoonists,"** by Seth Simons in Paste Magazine - per Longreads' description: "When Bob Mankoff retired from the New Yorker after twenty years as the Cartoon Editor, he left behind one of most

successful new media models of the era: The Cartoon Bank. It was a database he founded in 1992 and ran from an apartment in Yonkers, and it helped cartoonists license their work for thousands of dollars a month. But when Condé Nast bought the Bank from Mankoff in 1997, the money began to dry up and the model began to fail." <http://bit.ly/2x2R6uk>

--**"The Art of Space Art,"** by Kastalia Medrano in The Paris Review: "NASA, founded in 1958, has commissioned space art since its inception, and ... [has] sponsored artists' residencies over the years. ... NASA had a critical revelation early on: an astonishing discovery means nothing if the public only registers it as an abstraction." <http://bit.ly/2vZvZFo> (h/t ALDaily.com)

--**"Why Happy People Cheat,"** by Esther Perel in the October Atlantic: "A good marriage is no guarantee against infidelity." <http://theatlantic.com/2wvxomC>

--**"Too close for comfort: How social media changed how we talk to (and about) each other in America,"** by Yahoo News' Garance Franke-Ruta: "Social media has, by design, fundamentally reshaped how we have conversations with each other, moving casual speech from the auditory ether to the realm of the written. And it has vastly expanded the audience for conversations that used to happen in small communities of relatively similar people, replacing them with one-to-many interactions with people who potentially have a wide array of views, and weak or even no direct personal ties." <https://yhoo.it/2h823k9>

--**"How Israel Went Nuclear,"** by Shimon Peres in Tablet: "The father of Israel's nuclear deterrent reveals how it was built. An exclusive excerpt from 'No Room For Small Dreams,' Shimon Peres' posthumous autobiography." <http://bit.ly/2h7gODL> (h/t TheBrowser.com) ... **\$17.74 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2f0srMj>

--**"The Ideal Husband,"** by Susan Sontag in the Sept. 26, 1963 issue of the N.Y. Review of Books, reviewing "Notebooks, 1935-42," by Albert Camus: "Notoriously, women tolerate qualities in a lover-moodiness, selfishness, unreliability, brutality-that they would never countenance in a husband, in return for excitement, an infusion of intense feeling. In the same way, readers put up with unintelligibility, obsessiveness, painful truths, lies, bad grammar-if, in compensation, the writer allows them to savor rare emotions and dangerous sensations." <http://bit.ly/2h88UtJ> ... **\$16.19 on Amazon** <http://amzn.to/2x2WaPm>

--**"A Weird MIT Dorm Dies, and a Crisis Blooms at Colleges,"** by Emily Dreyfuss in Wired: "This was Senior House, the oldest dormitory on campus, built in 1916 by the architect William Welles Bosworth. For 101 years it welcomed freshman and returning students. Since the '60s it was a proudly anarchic community of creative misfits and self-described outcasts-the special kind of brilliant oddballs who couldn't or didn't want to fit in with the mainstream eggheads at MIT." <http://bit.ly/2f1vaVv> (h/t Longform.org)

--**"The Girl Gangs of El Salvador,"** by Lauren Markham in Pacific Standard Magazine:

"Joining a gang seemed like the best way to evade violence for women in El Salvador, but in many cases it only put them more squarely in danger." <http://bit.ly/2f0oRBQ>

--"**Welcome to the Far Eastern Conference**," by Wells Tower in the April 2011 edition of GQ: "Exiled from the NBA, vilified by the press, and ridiculed for a series of questionable YouTube videos (eating Vaseline? C'mon!), Stephon Marbury is seeking redemption-and vast riches-in basketball-mad China. Now, if he can just win over his Communist bosses, he'll be the biggest thing since Yao Ming." <http://bit.ly/2x5l90l>

--"**The Perfect Wife**," by Ariel Levy in The New Yorker's Sept. 30, 2013 issue: "How Edith Windsor fell in love, got married, and won a landmark case for gay marriage." <http://bit.ly/2fnYsyj>

--"**The Secret History of Fema**," by Garrett Graff in Wired: "FEMA has always been an odd beast inside the government-an agency that has existed far from the spotlight except for the occasional high-stakes appearance during moments of critical need. ... During the past seven decades, the agency has evolved from a top-secret series of bunkers designed to protect U.S. officials in case of a nuclear attack to a sprawling bureaucratic agency tasked with mobilizing help in the midst of disaster." <http://bit.ly/2x2cGin>

--"**The Way to Survive It Was to Make A's**," by Mosi Secret in the N.Y. Times Magazine: "They were the first black boys to integrate the South's elite prep schools. They drove themselves to excel in an unfamiliar environment. But at what cost?" <http://nyti.ms/2xFs84U>

--"**Robert Redford on Trump: 'He's Our Fault'**," by Michael Hainey in Esquire: "The legendary actor-activist isn't going to spend time overanalyzing the president. He'd rather America look in the mirror." <http://bit.ly/2x3uTMG>

Playbookers

SPOTTED: Jason Miller celebrating his wife's birthday last night at Archipelago on U St. He bought conservative reporters nearby a round of drinks at the Tiki-themed bar ... Jake Sullivan on Friday in Dupont Circle ... Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) yesterday at the Eastern Market flea market, "just strolling and looking at the stalls."

SPOTTED at Jake Kastan's birthday party last night at Stoney's on P Street: Brendan Buck, Garrett Haake, Jenna Sakwa, Jill Barclay, Ryan Williams, Lauren Pratapas, AshLee Strong, Corey Bliss, Zach Roday, Eli and Jenna Miller.

WEEKEND WEDDINGS -- SEC TRUCE CALLED! **Mary-Morgan Limperis**, global director of field and event marketing at Cision and the pride of Alabama, and **David Culver**, VP at Distilled Spirits Council and the pride of Tennessee, tied the knot at the

Rast Ivy Mansion in Nashville, Tennessee. The specialty cocktail was named "The Harper" for their dog and had silver tequila, Velvet Falernum, lime juice and agave syrup. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2wyLnYA>

--**SPOTTED:** Douglas and Liz Smith, Jake and Amanda Perry, Doug and Kelly Davenport, Ben Jenkins, Yebbie Watkins, Jesse and Devon McCollum, Lyndon Boozer and Karen Anderson, Cara Camacho and Adam Hodge, Mike Hacker, Colin Mueller, Tanya Fulkerson, Rhod Shaw, Rich Lopez, Peter Cressy, Mark Gorman, Drew Goesl, and Andrew and Laura Smith.

-- **Louise Dufresne**, CBS News producer, and **Will Serio**, communications director for Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), were married last night at Woodend Sanctuary in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The couple met in college at Vassar. "Friends and family watched the two communicators' nuptials in the scenic setting before heading inside to see the couple's first dance to 'At Last.'" **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2h9jULI> ... <http://bit.ly/2wymDjk>

-- **Ian Lindemann**, RNC alum and campaign manager for Victor Mitchell's Colorado gubernatorial race, married **Allison Bruhl**, an ENT physician assistant, at 11,550ft in Keystone, Colorado. They met on a congressional campaign in 2012. Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) officiated. **Pic** <http://bit.ly/2xqi2DP> **SPOTTED:** Groomsmen Chris Hansen and Owen Loftus, Frank Mataipule, Megan Cummings, Scott and Alexis Darnell, Hunter Mullins, Kristian Hemphill, Ali Pardo, Caleb Worthen, Paige and Jefferson Thomas, Hillary and Justin Prendergast, Michael Fortney, Hayden Stone, and Sarah Ramig.

-- Hamilton Place Strategies' **Dylan Riddle** and Hogar Immigrant Services' **Rebecca Fetters** married in Kennebunkport, Maine this weekend. The couple met at Gettysburg College. **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xIYVWQ> ... <http://bit.ly/2haif4r>

-- **Jessica Reinis**, a senior manager of communications content production at Charter Communications in Connecticut, on Saturday married **Alex Yergin**, who recently worked in business development at Palantir Technologies in NYC, at the Yergin family residence in Siasconset, Massachusetts. Yergin is an alum of Energy and Commerce, and the McCain and Romney campaigns. Reinis was previously an associate producer for CNN's "Erin Burnett OutFront." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2xqLcmf> ... <http://bit.ly/2w1vIXZ>

WELCOME TO THE WORLD -- Amber (Wilkerson) Marchand, managing director at Hamilton Place Strategies and a Roy Blunt and NRSC alum, and **Sterling Marchand**, associate at Baker Botts and a House Homeland security committee alum, email friends and family: "I'm thrilled to share the news that [Friday] night God blessed our family with another beautiful and healthy little boy, born September 15 at 7:51 p.m. (7 lbs, 15 oz; 20 inches)! This morning Foster (5), Quinn (4), and Ford (2) were thrilled to meet their new little brother, Milo William Henry." **Pics** <http://bit.ly/2frBfev> ... <http://bit.ly/2fcmy2k> ... <http://bit.ly/2xHYpin>

BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: David Litt, former Obama speechwriter, head D.C.

writer/producer for Funny Or Die and author of "Thanks, Obama: My Hopey, Changey White House Years," out Tuesday (**\$18.29 on Amazon:** <http://amzn.to/2jxwepz> -- **his NYT op-ed today** <http://nyti.ms/2y6b1p2>). **How he's celebrating:** "Jacqui, my fiancée, has a surprise planned, but I haven't been able to figure it out. She deals harshly with leakers." **Read his Playbook Plus Q&A:** <http://politi.co/2w224wr>

BIRTHDAYS: Don Baer, Worldwide Chair and CEO of Burson-Marsteller, celebrating in Amsterdam with his wife Nancy Bard -- their 30th wedding anniversary is on Wednesday (hat tips: Catherine Sullivan and Ben Chang) ... Richard Wolffe, columnist at the Guardian and CDO and CMO of Global Citizen, is 49 ... Bill Briggs ... Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) is 84. He celebrated by getting a cake from Sen. Dianne Feinstein at a Judiciary Committee hearing on Thursday (**2-min. video** <http://bit.ly/2ydiXWt>). He also shares his birthday with Constitution Day, which was the topic of his weekly Q&A this week (<http://bit.ly/2xFNFtZ>) ... retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni is 74 ... retired Justice David Souter is 78 ... writer Marin Cogan, a POLITICO alum who is also co-director of Princeton's Summer Journalism Program ... BuzzFeed's Henry Gomez (h/t Daniel Strauss) ... Angie Read ... Bill Bold ... Jack Keane, oldest son of Perkins Coie Political Law Group's Kate Keane ... Thomas Bride ... Anna Taylor ...

... **Sergio Rodriguera**, chief strategy officer at Credit Junction ... C-SPAN's Steve Scully ... Courtney O'Donnell, head of global external affairs at Airbnb and a Jill Biden alum ... Steve Kerrigan, president of Mass Military Heroes Fund, CEO of the 2013 Presidential Inauguration and Mass. Lt. Governor candidate, is 46 ... Kimberley Fritts, CEO of the Podesta Group (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Princeton econ professor Alan Krueger is 57 ... Politico Europe's Sara Stefanini ... Anthony Coley, EVP and managing director of comms at the Managed Funds Association, is 39 ... Nick Melvoin, the youngest and newest member of the LA school board, is 31 (h/t former NYU classmate Alex Levy) ... Courtney Laydon ... Leah V. LeVell, WH comms associate, one of the Hill's "50 Most Beautiful," former RNC and PIC staffer (h/t Paris Dennard) ... Amgen's Kathryn Phelps (h/t Bo Ollison) ... Christine Martin ... Monica Patel ... TJ Helmstetter, comms director for Americans for Tax Fairness ... 1776's Morgan Gress, the pride of Buffalo, NY, who gets married on Sept. 30 (h/ts fiancé Brian Johnson and Peter Cherukuri) ... Meghan Clyne ... Politico's John Clark ... Andrea Billups ... Doug Johnson ... Matt Everett ... Mackey Dykes ... Nate Berkus ... Claire Magee ... Christine Martin ... Adam Abrams ... Frayda Lieber ... Sandra Abrevaya ... Andrew High ... Brian Patrick ... Andrew Carter ... Cynthia Ruccia ... Isabel Morin ... Darcy Haber (h/ts Teresa Vilmain)

***** **A message from CTIA and America's wireless industry:** We need new rules for new 5G networks. New policies that will allow the U.S. to win the race to 5G and enable breakthrough advancements in healthcare, transportation, energy and more. First, a pipeline of low-, mid-, and high-band spectrum will help meet today's mobile needs and enable the 5G networks of tomorrow. Second, every level of government must modernize their rules for the building of small cell wireless infrastructure. Third, permanent and common sense federal regulations for interstate services like mobile broadband will preserve an open internet and protect consumer privacy while promoting innovation and investment. Finally, America's tax structure must be updated to spur

billions of dollars in new 5G investment. Learn more about how wireless is working to invest in America's future at CTIA.org. *****

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To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: Skolnik, Samuel
Sent: Tue 12/19/2017 6:41:58 PM
Subject: Time-sensitive questions from Bloomberg Government

Hi Jahan –

I just sent the following email to press@epa.gov, but wanted to make sure I got some kind of response today. My questions are regarding Definers Corp.

Any help appreciated,

Sam

--

Hi all. I cover federal contracting and procurement issues for Bloomberg Government, and am working on a daily story based off of reports that EPA today has dropped the contract with Definers Corp. to help the EPA shape press coverage of the agency, through a no-bid contract.

Questions:

1 – Why did EPA drop the Definers contract?

2 – Why was this a sole-source solicitation in the first place?

3 – How did EPA decide to solicit the work from Definers Corp. specifically?

4 – What did EPA need to do to justify this as a sole-source solicitation? Did the agency do what it needed to, to abide the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other pertinent laws? What exactly was that?

5 – Does EPA believe there are inherent risks to agencies, and by extension taxpayers, in no-bid contracts? If so, what are they?

I'm looking for comment (or EPA's written thoughts, attributable to Jahan Wilcox or whoever the right person might be) by 4 p.m. today. My contact info is below.

Thank you,

Sam

.....

Sam Skolnik

Senior Reporter

Bloomberg Government

Direct: (202) 416-3328

Cell: (702) 755-5729 *(On Fridays, please call my Cell)*

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@samskolnik

To: John Siciliano[jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com]
From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Fri 12/15/2017 6:44:20 PM
Subject: RE:

One additional statement regarding sole-sourcing.

“When the government seeks to sole-source a contract, notice must be placed on Fedconnect or Fedbizops so other vendors have an opportunity to provide documentation of their ability to provide the services outlined in the contract scope of work. In this case, one additional vendor responded with their qualifications and the media/news clips contract was awarded to Definers.” - EPA spokeswoman, Nancy Grantham

From: Wilcox, Jahan
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 11:28 AM
To: 'John Siciliano' <jsiciliano@washingtonexaminer.com>
Cc: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject:

“The Definers contract is for media monitoring/news clip compilation. The contract award was handled through the EPA Office of Acquisition Management and was \$87,000 cheaper than our previous media monitoring vendor while offering 24-7 news alerts once a story goes public.” – EPA spokesperson Nancy Grantham

Jahan Wilcox
EPA
Strategic Communications Advisor
Work Cell: 202.309.0934
Work Email: wilcox.jahan@epa.gov

To: Wilcox, Jahan[wilcox.jahan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy
Sent: Tue 5/2/2017 9:47:22 AM
Subject: Morning Energy: Methane CRA's fate remains unclear as time runs down — LaFleur queries New England states on market options — House subpanel tackles monument designations

By Anthony Adragna | 05/02/2017 05:43 AM EDT

With help from Jason Huffman and Annie Snider

METHANE CRA PICTURE REMAINS FUZZY: There's little more than a week left for Congress to nullify Obama-era regulations using the Congressional Review Act, but whether the Senate will be able to ax a BLM rule targeting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling on public lands remains as hazy as ever. Sen. [John Barrasso](#) said last week he was confident his resolution to block the rule would pass, but he doesn't yet appear to have the 50 votes he needs (with Vice President Mike Pence breaking the tie) firmly locked down. Environmentalists and Senate aides hoping to defeat the resolution are eyeing four publicly undecided senators — Democrat [Heidi Heitkamp](#) and Republicans [Rob Portman](#), [Cory Gardner](#) and [Dean Heller](#). (Don't forget, Sens. [Lindsey Graham](#) and [Susan Collins](#) have already signaled their opposition, so Barrasso could only afford to lose one more vote.)

"There are a few key players who have not yet declared their intentions," Robert Dillon, vice president of communications with the American Council for Capital Formation, a big CRA backer, told ME. "The whip operation continues and we continue to encourage members to vote for the CRA." Both Gardner and Portman told ME they were undecided late Monday, and Heather Taylor-Miesle, executive director of the Ohio Environmental Council, said the grassroots continued to push Portman against the resolution: "We had 5,000 people attend a tele-townhall on the issue last week here in Ohio so we know that people are concerned and want the senator to fiercely oppose any efforts to stop the methane rule," she told ME. A spokesman for Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) declined to comment on the CRA's timing, though ME hears rumblings it could slip until next week.

That comes as a former top Interior official sent [a letter](#) to Senate leadership warning "repealing this rule through the CRA will impair, if not eliminate altogether, BLM's ability to promote recapture of wasted gas" without Congress stepping in with new legislation. John Leshy, who served as the agency's solicitor from 1993-2001, warned: "Using the blunt instrument of the CRA might make a nice headline, but it could also forever insulate the industry from meaningful, effective regulation on this important subject, unless the Congress could muster the political will to provide new authority in new legislation."

LET'S MAKE A DEAL? Day two of FERC's much-watched [technical conference](#) kicks off today at 9 a.m., one day after Acting FERC Chairman Cheryl LaFleur questioned whether New England grid members would be able to reach an agreement with the agency to adapt the wholesale markets to their individual power generation goals by overcoming differences between state energy policy goals, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). States appear to want FERC to help keep power plants online and offer incentives for new plants to ensure grid reliability, but don't want interference in their policy goals or to be on the hook for subsidizing other states' efforts.